THE WARLORD
THE SAVAGE EMPIRE
by Mike Grell

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WARLORD

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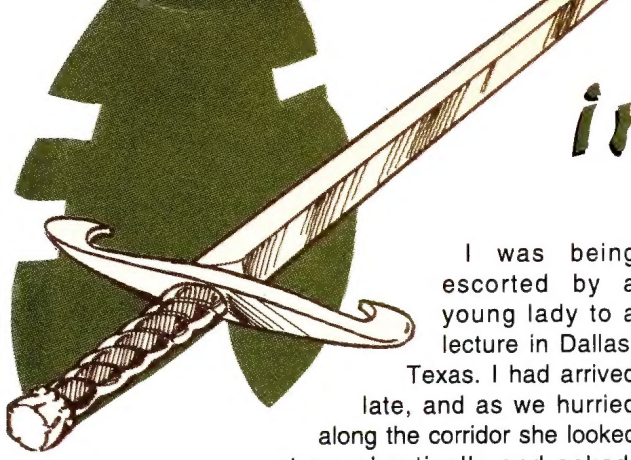


introduction

I was being escorted by a young lady to a lecture in Dallas, Texas. I had arrived late, and as we hurried along the corridor she looked at me skeptically and asked, "You're Mike Grell?"

"Disappointed?" I inquired.

"No," she lied...badly. "It's just that I didn't think you'd be so—"

"Short? Fat? Old? Bald? Ugly?"

"No," she denied emphatically. "It's not that. It's just that...well...I always thought you looked like *The Warlord*."

I get that a lot.

Twenty years ago I was sitting in Saigon, dreaming of the day I would take the comic strip world by storm with "The Savage Empire" — my answer to Hal Foster, Robert E. Howard and Edgar Rice Burroughs all rolled up in one. Fired by the rantings of a friend who suggested I become a cartoonist because "cartoonists only work two or three days a week and make a million dollars a year," I was fully prepared to make the sacrifice and begin living my life the same way Jack Lemmon did in "How To Murder Your Wife" (a documentary on the typical life of a typical cartoonist). All I needed was to get my foot in the door.

I still walk with a slight limp.

I told the story of how two years later DC Comics editor Julius Schwartz interrupted my encyclopedia-salesman introductory speech with "What the hell makes you think you can draw comics?" I tossed my portfolio on his desk and fired back, "Take a look. Then you tell me." What I never mentioned was that lurking in my portfolio was "The Savage Empire." Before I left Julie's office with my first script in hand, thanks to Joe Orlando's willingness to take a chance, I made sure to leave a copy of "The Savage Empire" with Julie for possible consideration.

I never dreamed how slowly the wheels of the DC machine turned.

Time shift; Fall, 1973. I'm sitting in publisher Carmine Infantino's office sweating bullets because he wants to know why the hell I took "The Savage Empire" to fledgling *Atlas Comics* instead of offering it to DC in the first place. And I wanted to know why the hell Atlas's editor called Carmine with the news. I hedged by pointing out that DC had had a miserable track record with the sword-and-sorcery genre and said I didn't think they'd be interested. "Let me be the judge of that," he said.

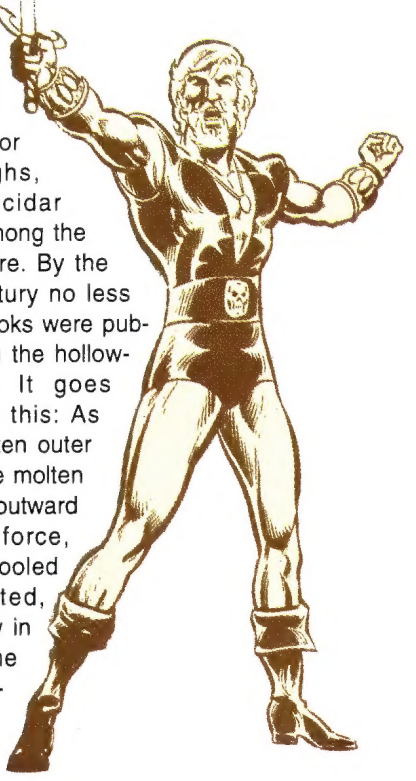
Something clicked.

Instinct.

I knew he wasn't going to buy it.

What happened next is politely called "thinking on your feet," or more to the point, a gigantic bovine bowel movement. During the next twenty minutes I changed almost everything about "The Savage Empire" and extemporaneously created *The Warlord*.

I think it was Agatha Christie who once said, "When you read a book, you get 10% plot, 20% characterization, and 70% whatever the author knows best." So what do I know about lost worlds? No more than any kid who grew up on a steady diet of Arthur Conan Doyle, Jules Verne and Edgar Rice Burroughs.The Atlantis setting for "The Savage Empire" became a lost world at the center of the Earth, where creatures of Earth's dim past walk side by side with beasts of myth and legend. In tribute to Verne I named this world *Skartaris*, after the mountain peak that points the way for Verne's intrepid explorers in *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*.



Verne was by no means the first to write of a world at the Earth's core. Nor was Burroughs, whose Pellucidar series I rank among the best of the genre. By the turn of the century no less than thirteen books were published based on the hollow-Earth theory. It goes something like this: As the Earth's molten outer crust cooled, the molten core was flung outward by centrifugal force, and it in turn cooled and contracted, leaving a hollow in the center of the Earth with open-

ings at each of the poles. Because the crust is many hundreds of miles thick, it is possible to enter the polar openings without being aware of the change of contour. Once inside we find an internal sun, a ball of flaming gases held by equilateral gravitational force from the outside crust. It dangles there, a "smokey god" keeping watch over a world of eternal sunlight. Here among the primeval forests incredible monsters dwell, ever ready to threaten our hero as he makes his way among the ruins of a lost civilization.

Now that the stage was set, it was time for the cast of characters. Jason Cord, the archaeologist, became Colonel Travis Morgan, Air Force spy pilot (the "Travis" was for my nephew and the "Morgan" was for Henry...the Raider, not the actor). Tahnee became Tara. Not much of a change there, and she was still modeled after Raquel Welch (we're all entitled to our fantasies, and this one is *mine,* thank you). Deimos became... well, it was too good a name to mess with (Mars has two moons: Deimos and Phobos, terror and fear.) Mariah (as in "They Call the Wind...") Romanova (named for the Russian royal family). An interesting match-up for Morgan: due to their differences in political ideologies, she is his equal intellectually as well as with a blade. Someone to keep his ego under control. Machiste (Mok' is tee — that may not be the way you pronounce it, but it's the way *I* pronounce it).

Plot? Simple: Modern man against primitive world. Stir in ample quantities of beautiful women (emphasis on "ample") and a dastardly villain who still reminds me a bit of Ming the Merciless...without Ming's sense of humor. Result: high adventure.

So why should *The Warlord* succeed where so many other comics in the sword-and-sorcery genre failed in the marketplace? Imagination.

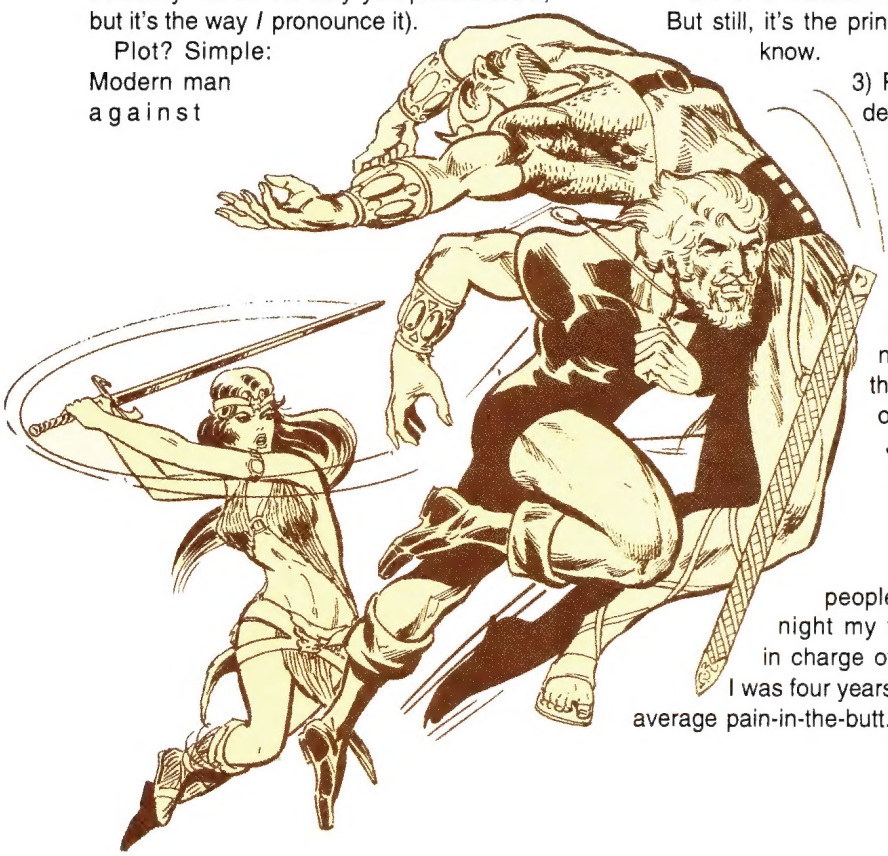
Not mine, the readers'.

I grew up in pre-TV Wisconsin, where our entertainment consisted of:

1) Comic strips: read aloud at the supper table by Dad, who does an hysterical Alley Oop.

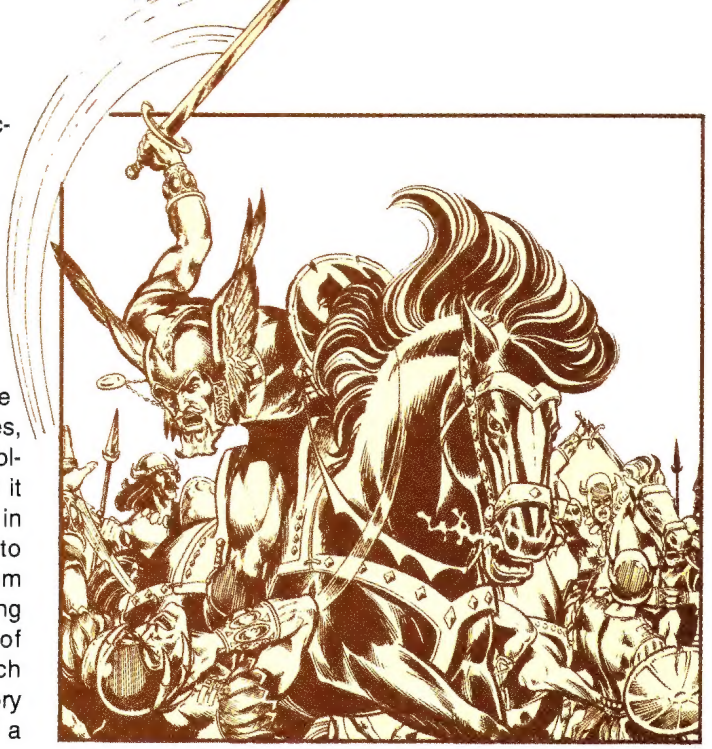
2) Comic books: bought for a dime, read, traded off, traded *back,* and re-read until they fell apart, then stashed in a cardboard box under the bed until we either got drafted, got married, or went to college, at which point Mom chucked the whole lot into the dump, including *Spider-Man* #1, *The Fantastic Four* #1, *X-Men* #1, *Green Lantern* #1, *The Flash* #105, and all of my Carl Barks *Donald Ducks.*

Every now and then, just to get even, I bring home a copy of the Overstreet Price Guide to show Mom. "Yep, there's that new car you and Dad have been wanting. And that vacation in Rio." Okay, so most of them didn't have covers, and the only thing "mint" about them was a candy cane smeared between the covers of a Golden Age *Captain America.* But still, it's the principle of the thing, you know.



3) Radio: somebody once described radio as television without the pictures. That's a pretty miserable description, because nothing could match the vivid imagery conjured up in our imaginations at the sound of the voice of The Shadow, or The Lone Ranger, or Jack Benny, or Burns and Allen.

In those days, the job of babysitting was done by real people. I'll never forget the night my two brothers were left in charge of the junior sibling, me. I was four years old and, I suppose an average pain-in-the-butt. Their careful supervi-



sion lasted until at least ten seconds after the car disappeared down the driveway and Mom and Dad were out of earshot, at which point they plopped me down next to the radio and handed me a comic book and a candy cane while they went outside to play.

Jack Benny was on, and he was always one of my favorites, followed by the Lone Ranger, followed by...*Lights Out!* By now it was dark, and the only light on in the house was the one next to the radio, the rest of the room cast in pools of deep, menacing shadow, harboring all sorts of monsters conjured up by Arch Obler's voice. And tonight's story just happened to be one about a *werewolf!*

Well, sir, there are two knobs on a superheterodyne radio, and even at four years old I was smart enough to know that if you turned one of them you could find yourself something else to listen to. Unfortunately, I wasn't smart enough to figure out which one. So I took a wild guess just as the cry of the werewolf echoed through the darkened room. When the folks arrived home a while later, I was sitting at the far end of the couch, bug-eyed and drooling like an idiot, listening to Andre Kostelanetz at full volume. I'm sure they never understood that one. And I never *did* find my damn candy cane.

4) Movies: two cartoons, a two-reeler, a serial chapter, and a feature film (usually *Tarzan*), plus popcorn, soda pop and a nickel left from your quarter to buy enough candy to keep you sick for a week.

5) Imagination: the woods around our home town were jungle and desert. Mongo and Camelot. Our backyard was the Alamo and Iwo Jima. Bunk beds became the Nautilus, and an overturned kitchen chair with crayon scrawls became the "motor chair" for a B-29 or a Stutz Bearcat.

And so at a time when everyone was clamoring for a definitive "Map of Skartaris" I refused. Refused to put a boundary on the boundless...the realm of the imagination.

How can there be modern horses coexisting with the eohippus and a unicorn? Dinosaurs and Neanderthals? Science and magic?

Beats me. They're just there. And it works because I created it out of imagination, and I *say* it works. Someone at a large convention once asked where the Warlord keeps his extra bullets. After pondering and hastily rejecting an answer involving suppositories, I replied, "If you have to know that in order to enjoy the story, you're taking this whole thing too damn seriously."

And don't bother asking whether Shakira is a cat who turns into a woman or a woman who turns into a cat. I ain't sayin'. Do you really want to see Raquel Welch without her makeup? I remember watching Mary Martin in *Peter Pan,* and I swear I never noticed the wires.

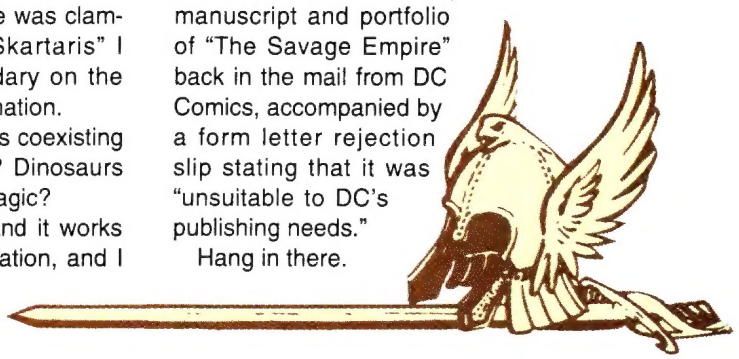
So let your imagination go when you read this. Let it fill in the blanks to suit you. Let it take you places I never knew were there. And maybe someday you'll create a world of your own and invite my imagination in to play. I'd like that.

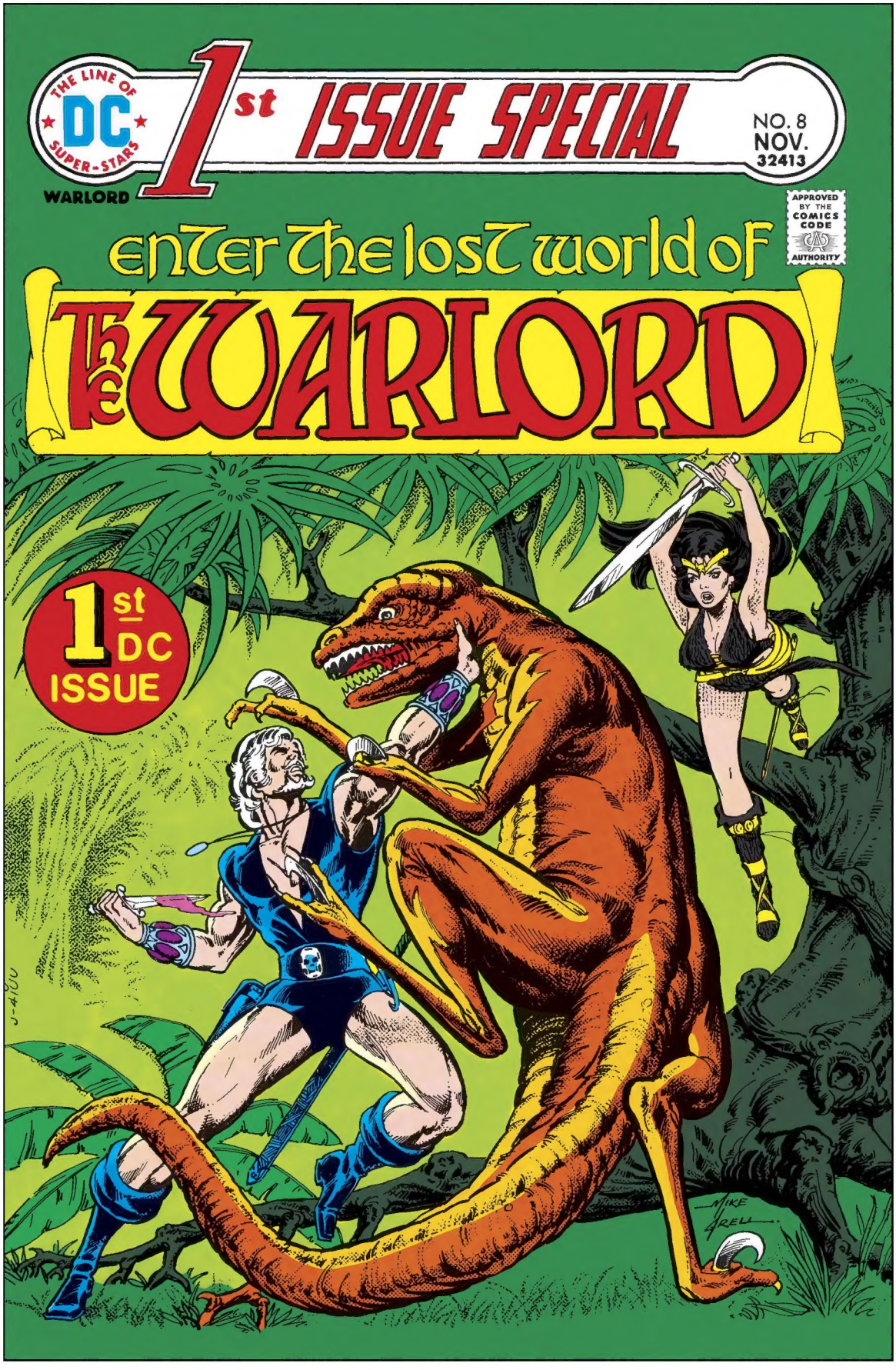
Oh, and by the way, I do look *exactly* like The Warlord. I'm just shorter, fatter, balder, and whole lot uglier.

Mike Grell
14 August 1991

P.S. In 1976 I received my manuscript and portfolio of "The Savage Empire" back in the mail from DC Comics, accompanied by a form letter rejection slip stating that it was "unsuitable to DC's publishing needs."

Hang in there.




THE LINE OF
DC
SUPER-STARS
WARLORD
1st ISSUE SPECIAL
NO. 8
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
enter the lost world of
THE WARLORD
1st DC ISSUE
MIKE GRELL

Survival--the most fundamental of human dramas. It takes a special breed of man to stand in the face of overwhelming odds in a world where merely staying alive is the greatest challenge of all. This is the epic tale of such a man. They call him...

THE WARLORD

WITNESS, IF YOU WILL, A FRAGMENT OUT OF TIME -- A TABLEAU OF CONFLICT THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ACTED OUT AT THE DAWN OF MAN -- A BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL IN A PRIMEVAL FOREST -- AND FOR *TRAVIS MORGAN--A NIGHTMARE!*

J·3967

WHEN DID IT ALL BEGIN? AN HOUR AGO? A DAY? A YEAR? MORGAN COULDN'T SAY FOR CERTAIN. IN A WORLD WHERE TIME DOES NOT EXIST, A YEAR OF PLEASURE MIGHT SEEM BUT A FLEETING MOMENT, AND A MOMENT OF AGONY... AN *ETERNITY!*

FOR *LT. COLONEL TRAVIS MORGAN, USAF,* THIS STORY BEGINS ON JUNE 16, 1969 -- 80,000 FEET OVER RUSSIA...

THE BRASS SENT ME UP HERE TO PHOTOGRAPH THE NEW INSTALLATION OUR SATELLITE SPOTTED LAST WEEK! I WONDER WHAT THE RUSSIANS ARE UP TO THIS TIME!

MUST BE SOMETHING BIG TO MAKE THE PENTAGON RISK AN OVER-FLIGHT!

THEY'VE LOADED A LOT OF SPECIAL GEAR BACK WHERE MY ELECTRONICS OFFICER USUALLY SITS... AND I DON'T LIKE IT! FLYING ***SOLO*** IS ***ASKING*** FOR TROUBLE!

AT THE TOUCH OF A LEVER, THE BOMB BAY DOORS SWING OPEN AND THE AUTOMATIC CAMERA BEGINS ITS TASK.

WHAT'S THE POINT? IF IT COMES TO ***NUCLEAR WAR,*** WHO CARES IF THE RUSSIANS CAN KILL THE WORLD'S POPULATION ***30*** TIMES AND WE CAN ONLY KILL IT ***25*** TIMES?

THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH PICTURES. NOW TO GET OUT OF HERE.

USAF

BR-EEEEE

DAMN! MISSILE RADAR... TRACKING ME! GOT TO JAM IT!

TOO LATE! THEY'RE ALREADY LOCKED ONTO ME!

BETTER GET OUT OF HERE...

...FAST!

UNNGH! SOME OF THAT CAUGHT UP TO ME!

MAGGIE'S DRAWERS, COMRADE! YOU MISSED ME!

USAF

UH-OH! SPOKE TOO SOON!

000 GAL FUEL

THE BLAST MUST'VE OPENED SOME SEAMS! FUEL'S *LEAKING OUT LIKE CRAZY!*

NO CHANCE OF MAKING TANKER RENDEZVOUS! GOT TO TRY FOR AN EMERGENCY SUPPORT BASE IN ALASKA!

NORTH POLE

SHORTEST ROUTE TO A RECOVERY BASE WILL TAKE ME RIGHT OVER THE *NORTH POLE!*

WITH AFTERBURNERS BLAZING A TRAIL THROUGH THE SKY, MORGAN SPURS HIS SLEEK, EBONY CHARGER HOMEWARD AT THREE TIMES THE SPEED OF SOUND...

AT "MACH 3," I MIGHT MAKE IT BEFORE MY TANKS RUN DRY!

BUT, AS MORGAN APPROACHES THE TOP OF THE WORLD...

BLAZES! SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT-- THE COMPASS WON'T FUNCTION OVER THE *NORTH POLE!*

BETTER STAY ON A STRAIGHT COURSE UNTIL IT CLEARS UP!

LONG MINUTES LATER, FATE DEALS TRAVIS MORGAN A CRUSHING BLOW...

AIR/SEA RESCUE, THIS IS TANGO DELTA NINER! *MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!* DO YOU COPY? OVER!

NO USE! RADIO'S *DEAD!*...

... AND SO AM *I!*

IF I DITCH IN THE ARCTIC OCEAN, I DON'T STAND A SNOWBALL'S CHANCE IN...

FUEL'S GONE! NOW I'M A 2,000 MILE-AN-HOUR *GLIDER!*

...*HEY!* LAND! THROUGH THAT BREAK IN THE CLOUDS!

ACCORDING TO THE COMPUTER GUIDANCE SYSTEM, THAT SHOULD BE THE ***YUKON TERRITORY*** BELOW!

THIS THING IS GOING DOWN ANYWAY, SO--!

IT'S STILL A LONG WALK HOME, BUT AT LEAST I WON'T END UP A ***HUMAN POPSICLE!***

SO LONG, SWEETHEART! TRY NOT TO LAND ON ANYBODY!

MORGAN'S DESCENT THROUGH THE SWIRLING MIST IS SWIFT, AND NONE TOO GENTLE...

UNNGH! HUNG UP! COULD'VE BEEN A SOFTER LANDING!

I'LL BE DA--! IT'S A--A ***JUNGLE!!***

IT WAS AFTER ***6 P.M.*** WHEN I DITCHED, AND YET...

...THE ***SUN*** IS DIRECTLY OVERHEAD! AND IT SEEMS ***LARGER!***

WHAT THE ***HELL*** IS GOING ON HERE?!!

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ***HORIZON?***

INDEED, THERE IS NO HORIZON! TRAVIS MORGAN'S ASTONISHED EYES GAZE OUT UPON AN INCREDIBLE PANORAMA OF LUSH FOREST, CURVING GRADUALLY UPWARD... AND UPWARD... AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE, UNTIL RIVERS AND JUNGLES AND MOUNTAINS HANG LIKE A TAPESTRY IN THE DISTANCE, AND CLIMB SLOWLY OUT OF SIGHT IN THE SWIRLING MIST!

TRAVIS MORGAN STANDS WONDER-STRUCK, AS ONE WHO HAS SEEN THE BEAUTY OF THE *ELYSIAN FIELDS!*

HE HAS FOUND INSTEAD *TARTARUS!*

TRAVIS MORGAN HAS JUST ENTERED A...

LAND of FEAR!

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED by
Mike Grell

EDITED BY
Joe Orlando

IF THIS IS *CANADA*, JOE NAMATH WEARS *PANTYHOSE!*

ONE THING IS CERTAIN -- I CAN'T STAY HERE...

...WHEREVER "*HERE*" IS!

MY *SURVIVAL VEST* HAS ABOUT EVERYTHING-- KNIFE, COMPASS, .38 SPECIAL AND 12 ROUNDS OF AMMO!

YEARS OF TRAINING AND DISCIPLINE HAVE TAUGHT MORGAN HIS OWN CAPABILITIES, AND SO, IT IS WITH THE GREATEST CONFIDENCE THAT HE STRIDES INTO THE SWELTERING JUNGLE, IN SEARCH OF CIVILIZATION.

LONG HOURS LATER, A CRYSTAL STREAM OFFERS RELIEF FROM THE BLAZE OF THE ETERNAL NOON-DAY SUN...

CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT-- IT'S BEEN HOURS, AND THE SUN IS STILL DIRECTLY OVERHEAD!

AT LEAST THERE'S PLENTY OF FRUIT AND WATER -- THIS IS A REGULAR *GARDEN OF EDEN!*

BUT *TRAVIS MORGAN'S* PARADISE IS ABOUT TO TURN INTO HELL...

WHAT WAS THAT?

DEINONYCHUS--CARNIVOROUS SAURIAN OF EARTH'S JURASSIC AGE! 150 MILLION YEARS AGO THIS SAVAGE FLESH-EATER STALKED THE PRIMORDIAL JUNGLES IN SEARCH OF PREY.

IT SOUNDS LIKE IT'S COMING FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THESE ROCKS.

HOW DID THIS CREATURE ESCAPE THE ICY DEATH THAT SWEPT EVERY OTHER DINOSAUR INTO OBLIVION? IF THE QUESTION EVEN OCCURS TO TRAVIS MORGAN, IT IS QUICKLY FORGOTTEN.

ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT THIS BEAST IS INTENT ON MAKING A MEAL OF THE MOST STUNNINGLY BEAUTIFUL GIRL HE HAS EVER SEEN.

FOR AN INSTANT, MORGAN IS SHOCKED TO INACTION...

...BUT ONLY FOR AN INSTANT...

THE SLUGS RIP THROUGH THE BEAST WITH LITTLE EFFECT. BELLOWING IN PAIN AND RAGE, IT TURNS TO FACE MORGAN'S ATTACK...

GUN'S EMPTY! WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO STOP THAT THING?

THE JUNGLE ECHOES TO THE ROARS OF THE GREAT LIZARD, AS MORGAN BATTLES WITH A FEROCITY THAT MATCHES THE BEAST'S OWN...

SUDDENLY, A LITHE FIGURE BRUSHES PAST MORGAN...

RUN, GIRL! GET AWAY WHILE YOU CAN!

... AND SHEATHES THREE FEET OF STEEL IN A REPTILIAN HEART!

THANKS! THAT THING GAVE ME A FEW BAD MOMENTS!

WHAT THE DEVIL KIND OF PLACE *IS* THIS ANYWAY-- *DINOSAURS-- JUNGLES?*

THE GIRL REPLIES IN A LANGUAGE THAT IS TANTALIZ-INGLY FAMILIAR, AND YET DIFFERENT FROM ANY MORGAN HAS EVER HEARD...

I'M SORRY, I DON'T UNDERSTAND-- YOU WANT ME TO FOLLOW YOU?

WHAT'S THE HURRY? THERE'S NO DANGER--THAT THING IS DEAD!

SUDDENLY THE GIRL'S MEANING BECOMES ALL TOO CLEAR, AS A SCORE OF AR-MORED WARRIORS, BURST INTO THE CLEARING...

UH-OH, TROUBLE! THEY MUST BE AFTER THE GIRL!

MORGAN QUICKLY RELOADS HIS PISTOL...

...AND DROPS THE TWO NEAREST ATTACKERS...

THE EFFECT IS DEVASTING...

THAT STOPPED THEM COLD! THEY'RE AFRAID OF THE GUN!

EXCEPT *THAT* ONE! HE SEEMS TO BE THEIR LEADER!

AGAIN THE SCREAMING HORDE ATTACKS...

AND AGAIN THE THUNDERING ROAR OF THE .38 SHATTERS THE JUNGLE STILLNESS...

GOT THEIR LEADER!

AS THE WARRIORS REGROUP FOR WHAT MORGAN KNOWS MUST BE THE FINAL CHARGE...

ONE BULLET LEFT...

BUT INSTEAD OF ATTACKING, THE WARRIORS SEND A SPOKESMAN...

HE WANTS US TO GO WITH THEM!

THE GIRL, TOO, UNDERSTANDS THE MESSAGE, AND WANTS NO PART OF IT...

I'M SORRY--I KNOW THEY'RE YOUR ENEMIES, BUT WE HAVE NO CHOICE!

WE'LL HAVE TO GO ALONG... FOR NOW!

AND SO, MORGAN AND THE GIRL ARE FORCED TO ACCOMPANY THE BAND OF WARRIORS. IT IS A LONG, ARDUOUS TREK BENEATH THE GLARING ORB OF THE NOON-DAY SUN, UNTIL AT LAST, THEIR DESTINATION IS SIGHTED--A FABULOUS, WALLED CITY TOWERING HIGH ABOVE THE TROPICAL JUNGLE.

THE GREAT WOODEN GATES BOOM SHUT BEHIND THEM, AND THEY ARE LED THROUGH THE COBBLE-STONE STREETS TO A MAGNIFICENT PALACE...

THE LOVELY BARBARIAN GIRL CLINGS TIGHTLY TO MORGAN, AS THEY ARE ESCORTED INTO THE PRESENCE OF THE KING--A SMALL, POMPOUS INDIVIDUAL WHOSE BEARING IS ANYTHING BUT REGAL...

BUT, AS IS OFTEN THE CASE, IT IS THE SINISTER FIGURE BEHIND THE THRONE THAT EXUDES POWER.

DEIMOS, HIGH PRIEST OF THE CITY OF THERA, HAS LISTENED WITH DISPLEASURE TO TALES OF THIS DEMON WHO SPEAKS WITH A VOICE OF THUNDER.

TO TEST THE POWER OF A GOD IS TO TEMPT DEATH--SWIFT AND HORRIBLE...

STILL, A THREAT TO ONE'S POSITION AT COURT CANNOT BE TOLERATED...

THE POWER OF THE STRANGE GLOBE LASHES OUT AT MORGAN...

THAT *BEAM*--BURNING INTO MY BRAIN!

BLACKING OUT--GOT TO *STOP* IT--!

THAT WAS MY LAST BULLET... BUT THEY DON'T KNOW THAT!

WELL! THIS IS MORE LIKE IT! SEEMS I'VE MADE QUITE AN IMPRESSION!

MORGAN AND THE LOVELY SAVAGE ARE ESCORTED TO A LUXURIOUS CHAMBER IN THE PALACE...

HERE, HE IS BATHED AND CLEANSED OF THE DRIED BLOOD AND GRIME OF HIS INCREDIBLE ORDEAL, AS HIS COMPANION WATCHES WITH OPEN DISAPPROVAL...

GREATLY REFRESHED, HE IS CLOTHED IN GARB MORE SUITED TO THE OCCASION...

A SUMPTUOUS FEAST HAS BEEN PREPARED IN MORGAN'S HONOR, BUT OVER THE FESTIVITIES, THERE HANGS A CLOUD OF SINISTER FOREBODING...

AT LENGTH, THE EVENTS OF HIS ORDEAL TAKE THEIR TOLL, AND MORGAN FALLS INTO THE DREAMLESS SLEEP OF EXHAUSTION...

UNTIL...

UNNGH! MUSCLES... *STIFF!* I WONDER HOW LONG I'VE BEEN ASL---

TIME-- THE INTANGIBLE MASTER THAT ENSLAVES KING AND COMMONER ALIKE! THEY WEAR ITS MANACLES UPON THEIR WRISTS AND OBEY ITS EVERY COMMAND-- TIME TO EAT-- TIME TO SLEEP-- TIME TO WORK-- TIME TO DIE! TRAVIS MORGAN HAS JUST BEEN SET FREE...

...IT'S CALLED A *WATCH!* IN MY WORLD IT'S USED TO MEASURE *TIME!*

HMMMPH! TIME-- IN THIS PLACE THE WORD IS ABOUT AS USELESS AS THAT PIECE OF TIN!

TO A MAN WHO SPEAKS RUSSIAN WITH NO TRACE OF AN ACCENT, THE MASTERY OF ANOTHER LANGUAGE POSES LITTLE PROBLEM! UNDER THE CAREFUL TUTORING OF *TARA*, THE LOVELY BARBARIAN, MORGAN BEGINS LEARNING THE LANGUAGE AND CUSTOMS OF...

...*SKARTARIS!* A STRANGE NAME FOR A STRANGE WORLD!

WHAT ABOUT YOU, *TARA*? WHAT WERE YOU DOING ALONE IN THE JUNGLE?

I WAS WITH A HUNTING PARTY THAT STRAYED TOO FAR FROM OUR HOMELAND, *SHAMBALLAH!*

IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE GREAT FIRE MOUNTAIN, WE WERE SET UPON BY THERAN SOLDIERS LOOKING FOR SACRIFICES FOR THEIR *BLOOD GOD!*

I ALONE ESCAPED!

THEY CALL *US* SAVAGES, BUT MY PEOPLE DO NOT SACRIFICE HUMAN LIVES TO THEIR GODS! THAT PRIEST, *DEIMOS*, IS A DEVIL!

BUT...SURELY YOU *KNOW* THIS, IF YOU ARE THE *GOD* THEY SAY!

A GOD! HA! HA!

NO, TARA! NOT A GOD, BUT A *MAN* LIKE ANY OTHER!

LOOK...I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THIS! IT'S A CROSS SECTION OF THE EARTH! IT'S *HOLLOW* LIKE THIS BALL--WITH OPENINGS AT BOTH POLES!

1400 MILES

800 MILES

BUT THE OPENINGS ARE SO *HUGE* THAT WHEN MY PLANE ENTERED AT THE NORTH POLE, I DIDN'T NOTICE THAT GRADUAL CURVE OF THE EARTH-- I THOUGHT I WAS OVER LEVEL GROUND!

YOUR SUN IS A BALL OF FLAMING GAS, HELD IN THE *EXACT CENTER* OF THE EARTH BY *GRAVITY* PULLING ON IT EQUALLY ON ALL SIDES! THAT'S WHY THERE IS NEVER ANY *NIGHT* IN *SKARTARIS* -- ONLY PERPETUAL DAYLIGHT!

YOU'RE SAYING YOU CAME FROM A WORLD OUTSIDE SKARTARIS, AND *FLEW* HERE IN A THING CALLED "*PLANE?*"

EXACTLY!

YOU'RE CRAZY!

I'M BEGINNING TO THINK SO!

UNKNOWN TO MORGAN AND TARA, THEIR CONVERSATION IS OVERHEARD...

WHERE HUMAN LIFE IS A CHEAP COMMODITY, TREACHERY ALWAYS HAS ITS PRICE...

WHO ELSE HAVE YOU TOLD OF THIS, GIRL?

NO ONE, LORD DEIMOS! AFTER THE STRANGER HUMILIATED YOU BEFORE THE KING, I KNEW YOU WOULD BE GENEROUS TO ONE WHO BROUGHT THE NEWS!

YOU SHALL HAVE YOUR REWARD! BUT FIRST... A LITTLE WINE?

WHILE MORGAN AND TARA SLEEP, A HIDDEN PANEL SWINGS ASIDE AND THREE MERCENARIES ENTER THE DARKENED CHAMBER, BLADES DRAWN...

THESE RUTHLESS KILLERS HAVE HEARD THE RUMORS OF MORGAN'S GREAT POWER, BUT ALL THAT MATTERS IS THE CONSIDERABLE WEIGHT OF THE HIGH PRIEST'S GOLD, JINGLING SOFTLY IN THEIR PURSES.

BUT AS THE ASSASSIN PREPARES TO STRIKE...

LIKE A WILD ANIMAL, TARA IS INSTANTLY AWAKE AT THE FIRST SOUND...

THE FIRST MERCENARY FALLS TO HER SLASHING BLADE BEFORE HE CAN BRING HIS OWN WEAPON INTO PLAY...

THE SECOND IS MORE WARY... SIZING UP HIS OPPONENT...

...AND THEN LAUNCHING A VICIOUS ATTACK, SEEKING TO OVERPOWER THE SLIM GIRL...

WITH HER BACK TO THE WALL, TARA FIGHTS IN GRIM SILENCE!

BUT HER FOE HAS RECKONED WITHOUT THE MAN FROM THE OUTER WORLD...

...AND IN THE SPACE OF A HEARTBEAT, IT IS OVER!

ASSASSINS! I SMELL THE HAND OF A *HIGH PRIEST* IN THIS!

DEIMOS! THEN WE ARE NO LONGER SAFE IN THERA!

COME WITH ME, MORGAN! YOU WILL BE WELCOME IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE! THE WAY LIES OPEN TO US!

BENEATH THE UNBLINKING ORB OF ETERNAL NOON, *TRAVIS MORGAN*-- LATE OF A WORLD CALLED *"EARTH"*— AND *TARA*-- A WARRIOR WOMAN OF *SKARTARIS*-- STEAL FROM THE CITY OF THERA AND ARE SWALLOWED BY THE JUNGLE, BOUND FOR A DISTANT LAND--BOUND FOR *ADVENTURE*.

-THE BEGINNING!

enter the lost world of THE WARLORD

THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS

NOW IN HIS OWN MAGAZINE!

NO. 1 FEB. 32482

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

enter the lost world of THE WARLORD

The clash of steel upon steel shatters the stillness of a jungle clearing! It is a sound that can chill a man to the bone, or turn his blood to fire--the ringing battle song of the WAR GODS--a sound destined to become a familiar theme in the saga of...

The WARLORD®

THE ETERNAL SUN OF **SKARTARIS** STARES DOWN UPON TWO COMBATANTS--A **WARRIOR** AND A **TRAVELER**--AS THEY WHIRL AND DANCE A BALLET OF DEATH!

"HOW DID IT HAPPEN? WHAT AM I DOING HERE?" EVEN AS HE FENDS OFF HIS OPPONENT'S DARTING BLADE, *TRAVIS MORGAN* ASKS HIMSELF THESE QUESTIONS AS HE HAS ASKED HIMSELF A HUNDRED TIMES SINCE HE FIRST ENTERED...

THIS SAVAGE WORLD

WRITTEN and ILLUSTRATED By
MIKE GRELL
Edited By
ROSS ANDRU

IT BEGAN WHEN *LT. COLONEL TRAVIS MORGAN'S SR-71* SPY PLANE WAS NEARLY BLASTED OUT OF THE SKY BY RUSSIAN MISSILES...

IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO RETURN TO HIS BASE BEFORE HIS RUPTURED FUEL TANKS RAN DRY, MORGAN FAILED TO NOTICE THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH GRADUALLY CURVING *INWARD* NEAR THE NORTH POLE. IN FOLLOWING THAT CURVE, MORGAN PLUNGED EVER DEEPER INTO THE *CORE OF THE EARTH...*

HIS FUEL EXHAUSTED, MORGAN PARACHUTED TO SAFETY AND FOUND HIMSELF IN A WORLD OF *ETERNAL SUNLIGHT*-- A *TIMELESS* WORLD WHERE PREHISTORIC BEASTS STILL ROAM A TOWERING TROPICAL FOREST...

IN A DARING RESCUE, MORGAN SAVED THE WARRIOR WOMAN, *TARA*, FROM A REPTILIAN MONSTER...

... ONLY TO BE CAPTURED BY SOLDIERS THAT HAD BEEN PURSUING HER, AND TAKEN TO THE FABULOUS CITY OF *THERA*...

THEY WERE WELL RECEIVED AT THE COURT OF *KING BALDUR*, WHO BELIEVED MORGAN TO BE A SUPERNATURAL BEING, BUT MORGAN INCURRED THE WRATH OF *DEIMOS*, THE HIGH PRIEST...

AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT FOLLOWED...

NO LONGER SAFE IN THERA, *MORGAN* AND *TARA* WERE FORCED TO FLEE.

THRUST INTO A WORLD WHERE DANGER IS A PART OF EVERY WAKING MOMENT, MORGAN IS FORCED TO REVERT TO MAN'S PRIMITIVE INSTINCTS. THE MOST BASIC OF THESE IS *SURVIVAL*...

WELL DONE, MORGAN! NOW *YOU* ARE THE TEACHER!

BUT *FIRST*... A FINAL LESSON--!

ALWAYS EXPECT THE *UN-EXPECTED!*

IN *MY* WORLD, ONE MISTAKE CAN COST YOU YOUR *LIFE!*

WHEN TARA IS AT LAST SATISFIED WITH MORGAN'S SKILL WITH A BLADE, THEY RESUME THEIR INTERRUPTED JOURNEY...

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE US TO REACH YOUR HOMELAND, TARA?

SHAMBALLAH LIES BEYOND THE GREAT FIRE-MOUNTAIN! WE WILL SLEEP MANY TIMES BEFORE OUR JOURNEY IS ENDED!

DO NOT FEAR-- YOU WILL BE WELCOME IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE...

...BUT I ADVISE YOU NOT TO TELL THAT *RIDICULOUS STORY* TO ANYONE!

I KNOW IT SOUNDS CRAZY, TARA, BUT 800 MILES BENEATH OUR FEET THERE ARE VAST CITIES-- MILLIONS OF PEOPLE!

AND WHAT KEEPS THEM FROM *FALLING OFF?*

"*GRAVITY!* IT'S A FORCE THAT ATTRACTS *OBJECTS* TO THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH! IT'S WHAT MAKES AN APPLE *FALL* FROM A TREE INSTEAD OF *FLYING OFF* INTO THE *SKY!*"

CENTER of GRAVITY

YOU ARE *MAD!* EVERYONE *KNOWS* THAT *SKARTARIS* IS SHAPED LIKE A *BOWL*, AND IS HELD NEAR THE SUN BY THE GIANT, *ASHANTI!*

IF YOU GO TOO NEAR THE *EDGE*, YOU WILL FALL OFF INTO THE *ABYSS* WHERE ALL IS *DARKNESS!*

AS THEIR JOURNEY THROUGH THIS WONDEROUS NEW WORLD CONTINUES, MORGAN FINDS HIS ADMIRATION FOR THIS LOVELY SAVAGE GROWING STRONGER...

AT HOME AT LAST IN THE WILD, SHE IS A *SAVAGE DIANA* REVELING IN THE JOY OF FREEDOM! /5

BUT MOMENTS OF RELAXATION ARE FEW IN A WORLD WHERE THE ONLY LAW IS THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE. THE *STRONG* PREY UPON THE *WEAK*...

...AND ARE, IN TURN, PREYED UPON BY THE *STRONGER*...

A TYRANNOSAURUS!

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

I JUST HOPE THIS THING CAN'T *CLIMB!*

MAKE FOR THOSE TREES... *FAST!*

WELL, THERE GOES OUR LUNCH!

MORGAN! LOOK! DOWN THERE!

THEY'RE BEING TAKEN TO THE SLAVE MARKET AT BAL SHAZAR!

IS THERE NOTHING WE CAN DO?

BE THANKFUL THAT WE ARE NOT AMONG THEM!

SOMEHOW... SOMEHOW I HOPED IT MIGHT BE DIFFERENT IN *YOUR* WORLD, TARA!

COME, MORGAN! WE HAVE A LONG JOURNEY AHEAD.

GAME IS PLENTIFUL, AND SOON THE TRAVELERS TAKE REFUGE IN A SHELTERED CAVE...

IT'S *AMAZING*-- THE WAY YOU CAN *NAVIGATE* IN A WORLD WHERE THE SUN NEVER MOVES, TARA!

IT IS NOTHING! IN MY COUNTRY, ANY *CHILD* CAN DO IT... WITH *THIS*!

I'LL BE-- IT'S A *COMPASS*!

WHERE DID YOU GET IT?

IT IS A SECRET OF MY PEOPLE--HANDED DOWN BY THE *ANCIENTS*!

IT'S A LITTLE *PRIMITIVE*... BUT IT WORKS AS WELL AS *MINE*!

SLEEP CLAIMS THEM AT LAST. BUT, FOR TARA, IT IS A SLEEP HAUNTED BY STRANGE MUSIC THAT CALLS TO HER ACROSS HER DREAMS...

THE HYPNOTIC REFRAIN SEEMS TO BECKON, "FOLLOW ME! FOLLOW ME! FOLLOW ME!"...

HOW LONG HE HAS SLEPT, MORGAN CANNOT SAY. HE ONLY KNOWS THAT WHEN HE AWAKES...

TARA?

GONE! BUT WHERE?

HER SWORD! SHE'D NEVER LEAVE IT BEHIND! UNLESS--!

PLUNGING THROUGH THE JUNGLE IN MAD PURSUIT, MORGAN COMES AT LAST TO A SINISTER GROTTO WHERE THE RIOTOUS FOLIAGE BLOTS OUT THE SUN...

GOT TO FIND HER!

THAT STRANGE MUSIC--COMING FROM THAT OPENING...!

...AND TARA'S TRAIL LEADS HERE!

AS IF CONTROLLED BY SOME MAD *PUPPETEER*, TARA WHIRLS AND DANCES *HELPLESSLY* IN THE GRIP OF THE UNEARTHLY MUSIC...

A *SATYR!*

HE'S CAST A *SPELL* ON HER WITH HIS MUSIC!

SATYR! THE GOAT-MAN OF ANCIENT GREECE! A LEGEND! A MYTH! A REALITY!

OHH... MORGAN! I FEEL SO... STRANGE! I...I COULDN'T STOP--!

IT'S ALL RIGHT! IT'S OVER NOW!

COME ON! LET'S GET BACK TO CAMP!

WITH THE SMOKE FROM THEIR CAMPFIRE GUIDING THE WAY, THEY HAVE LITTLE TROUBLE FINDING THEIR WAY BACK TO THE CAVE...

...NOT REALIZING THAT *OTHERS* HAVE FOLLOWED THE SAME BEACON...

THE SLAVE RAIDERS!

THEY'VE COME BACK!

BACK TO BACK IN THE DARKNESS OF THE CAVE, MORGAN AND TARA BATTLE WITH THE UNLEASHED FURY OF CORNERED ANIMALS...

A MILLION YEARS OF CIVILIZATION FALL AWAY IN AN INSTANT AND TRAVIS MORGAN BECOMES A **SAVAGE**--CLEAVING FLESH, BONE AND CARTILAGE--WREAKING SLAUGHTER ON ALL SIDES!

FOR AN INSTANT, THE WAY TO SAFETY STANDS CLEAR...

OUTSIDE, TARA! RUN FOR IT!

BUT A GLANCING BLOW FROM A HARD-FLUNG WAR CLUB TURNS MORGAN'S BRAIN INTO BRIGHT SHARDS OF LIGHTNING...

THE VELVET BLACKNESS THAT SWEEPS OVER HIM IS SLOW TO DEPART...

SHADOWY FORMS DRIFT THROUGH A HALF-DREAM WORLD...

AND SLOWLY TAKE SHAPE...

AWAKE? GOOD! HE'LL FETCH A *FINE* PRICE!

IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO HAVE TO *KILL* HIM BECAUSE HE COULD NOT KEEP UP WITH THE REST!

I'M SORRY, MORGAN! THERE WERE TOO MANY OF THEM!

AND SO BEGINS THEIR INCREDIBLE ORDEAL. OUT OF THE SHELTERING JUNGLES AND INTO THE BLAST-FURNACE HEAT OF A VAST DESERT, THE CARAVAN SLOWLY MAKES ITS WAY...

MORGAN HAS, AT LEAST, NOT BEEN DEPRIVED OF TARA'S COMPANY. HER PRIDE AND BEARING ARE A SOURCE OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO HIM...

...SO THAT BY THE TIME THE CARAVAN MAKES ITS FIRST REST STOP, HE HAS FORMULATED A PLAN FOR ESCAPE...

TARA! DON'T TURN AROUND! PRETEND TO BE ASLEEP!

THE CHAIN FROM MY DOG TAGS IS A *TITANIUM STEEL ALLOY*... MADE TO WITHSTAND A *FIRE*!

WITH A LITTLE LUCK AND ENOUGH *TIME*, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO USE IT TO CUT THROUGH THAT *SOFT IRON* SLAVE COLLAR!!

ALL THROUGH THE REST PERIOD MORGAN SAWS AT THE COLLAR. WHEN THE MARCH IS RESUMED, HE HAS BARELY SCRATCHED THE SURFACE...

...BUT IT IS A START!

MANY MARCHES LATER, THE BURNING SAND GIVES WAY TO HIGH PEAKED MOUNTAINS...

THE *SLAVE MARKET* AT BAL SHAZAR LIES BEYOND THOSE MOUNTAINS!

THEN WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE OUR *MOVE* AT THE NEXT REST STOP!

GET THEM ACROSS! WE'LL MAKE CAMP ON THIS SIDE!

MORGAN'S EFFORTS HAVE PAID OFF! ONLY A SMALL SECTION OF IRON HOLDS TARA'S SLAVE COLLAR TOGETHER...

BUT BEFORE HE CAN COMPLETE HIS TASK...

YOU TWO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE?

SUDDENLY, MORGAN EXPLODES INTO ACTION...

AARGH!

NO TIME FOR STEALTH NOW! MORGAN STRAINS DESPERATELY AGAINST THE IRON COLLAR, UNTIL...

SNAP!

THE HORSES, TARA! QUICKLY!

GO! I'LL HOLD THEM AS LONG AS I CAN!

NO! NOT WITH-OUT YOU!

MORGAN!

GOOD-BYE, TARA! I HOPE YOU MAKE IT!

FOR A MOMENT MORGAN WATCHES AS TARA IS CARRIED FROM HIS SIGHT, PERHAPS FOREVER...

AND THEN ALL THOUGHT IS LOST, AS THE FIRST OF HIS ENEMIES IS UPON HIM...

MORGAN'S VISION SWIRLS IN A BLOOD RED HAZE, AS HE DEALS DEATH AND DESTRUCTION TO ALL WHO COME WITHIN REACH OF HIS SLASHING BLADE...

HE KNOWS THAT VICTORY IS IMPOSSIBLE AGAINST THESE ODDS! HE CAN ONLY HOPE TO BUY TIME...

AT LAST, HIS TIME RUNS OUT...

BLACKNESS AGAIN! THIS TIME IT IS SLOWER TO PASS...

AH! AWAKE AT LAST!

YOU KILLED NEARLY A SCORE OF MY MEN! I ADMIRE YOU FOR THAT...

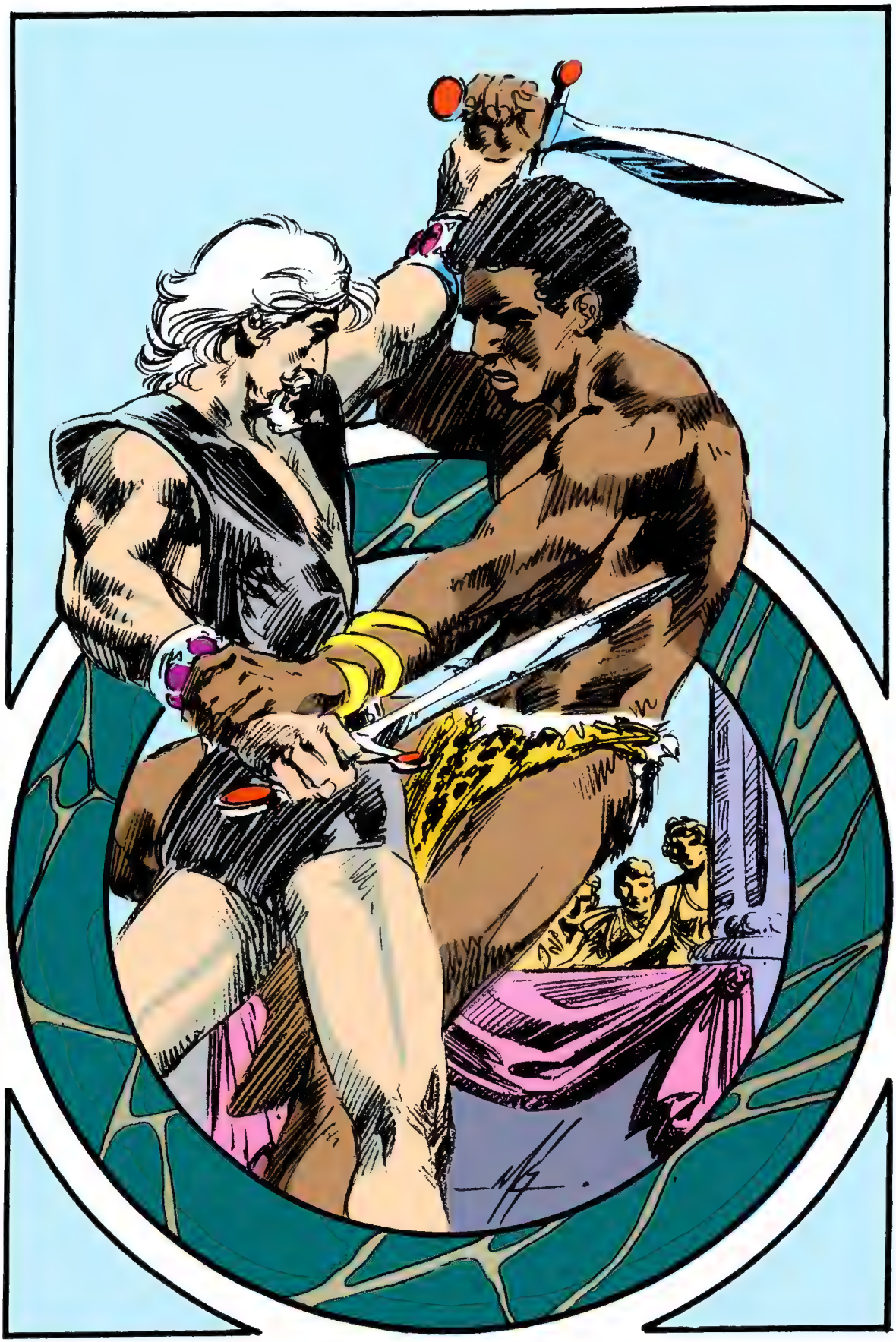
...BUT YOU ALSO COST ME A GOOD STEED AND A SLAVE GIRL!

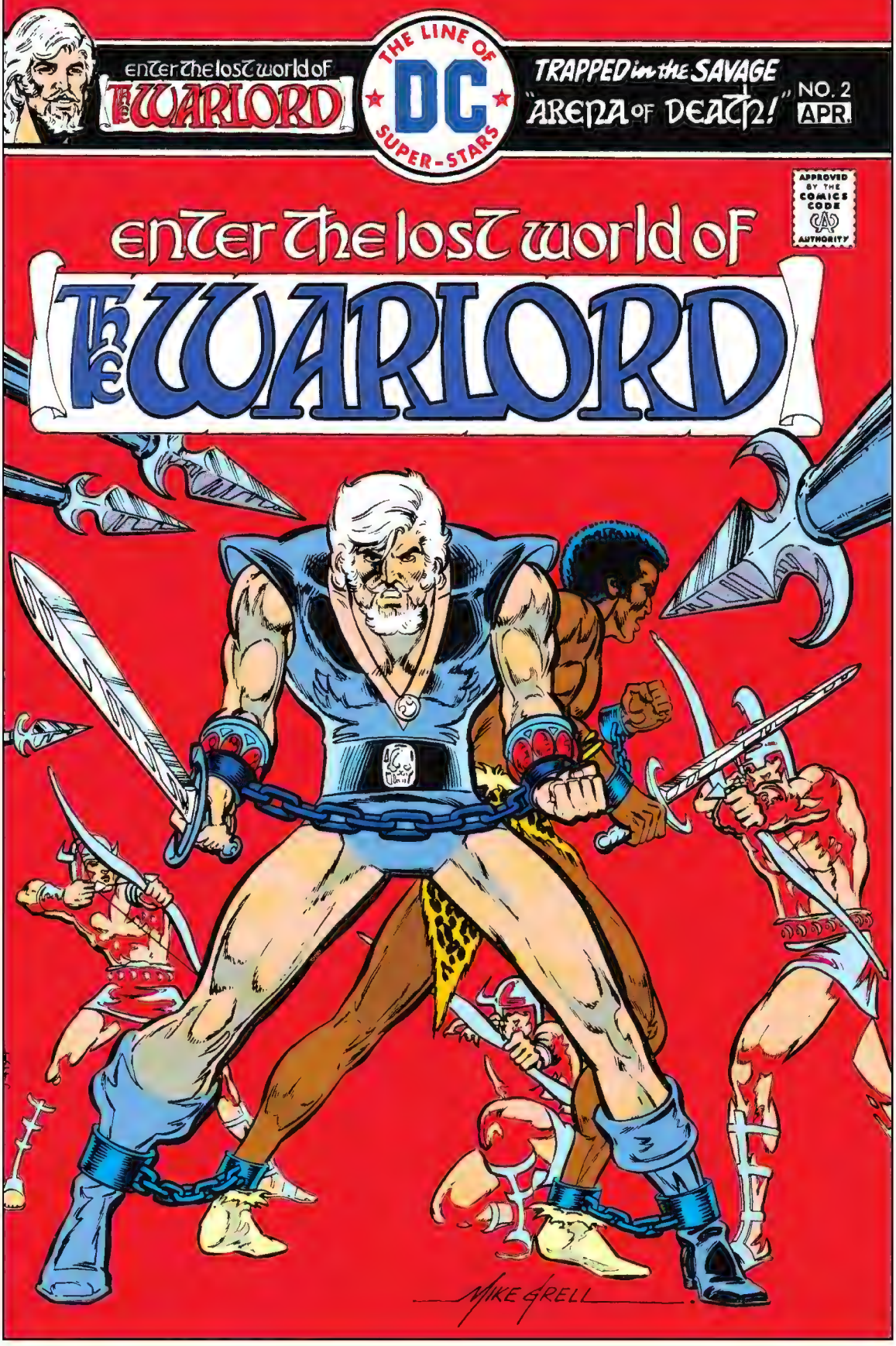
FOR THAT, YOUR DEATH WILL BE SLOW!

STICK IT IN YOUR EAR!

HOW AMUSING! BRAVADO! COMING FROM A MAN IN YOUR... er... POSITION?

HAHAHAH

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TRAPPED in the SAVAGE "ARENA OF DEATH!"
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THE WARLORD
MIKE GRELL

"I'D LIKE TO SEE THAT LAND BEYOND THE (NORTH) POLE. THAT AREA BEYOND THE POLE IS THE CENTER OF THE GREAT UNKNOWN."
--REAR ADMIRAL RICHARD E. BYRD, USN

THIS IS THE SAGA OF A MAN WHO DARED TO ENTER THE UNKNOWN AND FOUND A WORLD OF DANGER BENEATH THE BLOOD-RED GLARE OF ETERNAL SUNLIGHT!

FOR *TRAVIS MORGAN*, FORMERLY OF A WORLD CALLED *EARTH*...

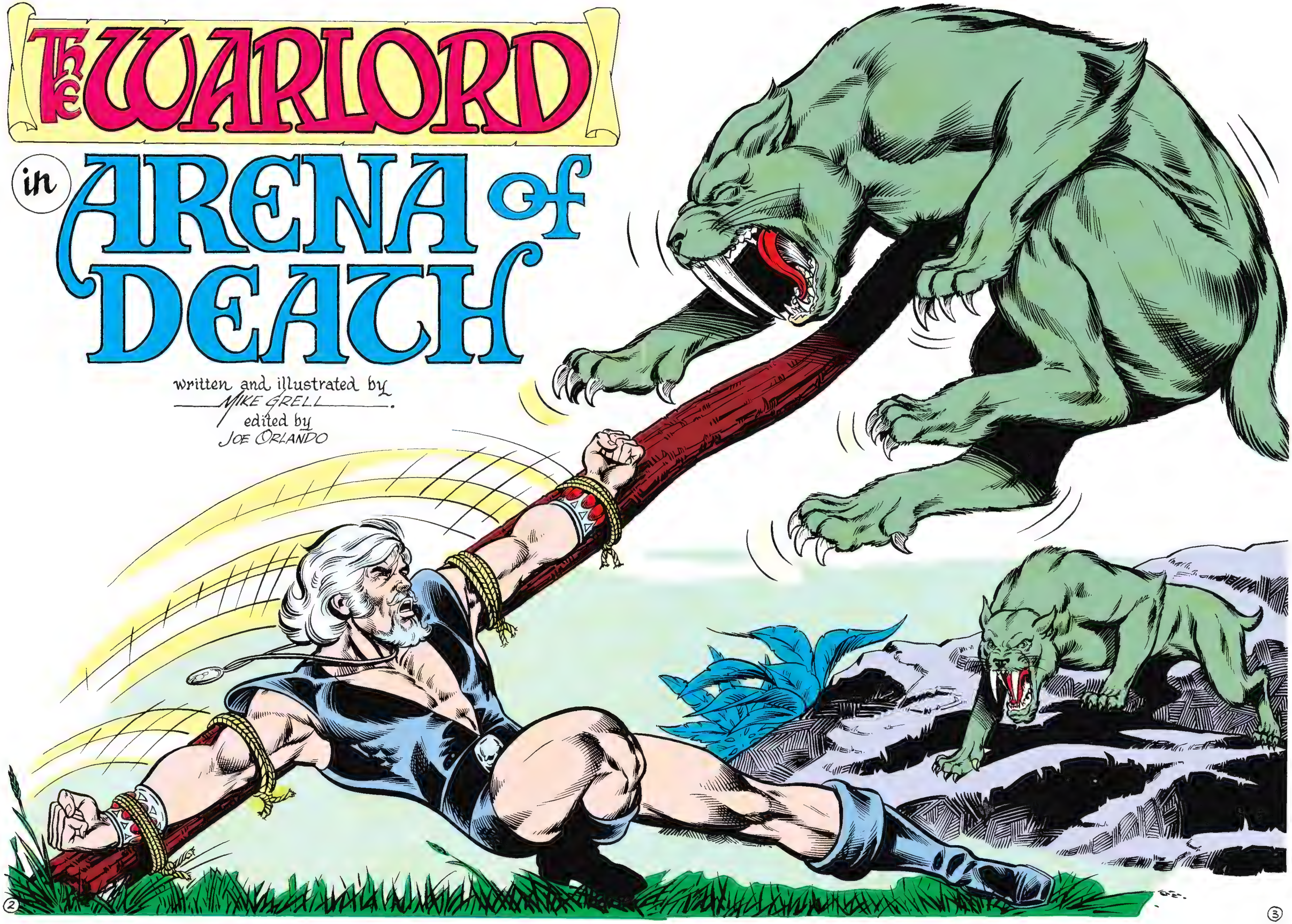
...THIS IS A TIME OF *BOTH!*

GRAAK

IN EVERYONE, THERE ARE HIDDEN RESERVES OF STRENGTH AND COURAGE WHICH MAY BE CALLED UPON IN TIMES OF GREAT *DANGER*... OR GREAT *FEAR!*

The WARLORD in ARENA of DEATH

written and illustrated by
MIKE GRELL
edited by
JOE ORLANDO



THE SABERTOOTH'S MOMENTUM CARRIES ITS NOW LIFELESS BODY *OVER* TRAVIS MORGAN IN AN ARC, LIKE SOME HUGE METRONOME MARKING TIME IN THIS DANCE MACABRE...

LEAVING HIM AT THE SNARLING MERCY OF THE GREAT CAT'S MATE...

YOU MUST HAVE MADE SOMEONE VERY ANGRY INDEED! WHO DID YOU KILL?

OR SHOULD I SAY... *HOW MANY?*

ABOUT *TWENTY* AT LAST COUNT! *SLAVE RAIDERS*-- THEY AMBUSHED ME AND A GIRL ON OUR WAY TO *SHAMBALLAH!* WE ESCAPED, BUT I WAS RECAPTURED!

SHAMBALLAH YOU SAY? WHY, I AM CAPTAIN OF THE *GRYFALCON,* WHICH SAILS FOR THAT PORT WITH THE NEXT TIDE!

I'D BE PLEASED TO HAVE ANOTHER HARDY LAD ABOARD! I AM *DROGAR, THE TERRIBLE!*

YOU'VE GOT A DEAL, CAPTAIN! MY NAME IS *MORGAN,* THE ...ER... *RAIDER!*

BAL SHAZAR: SPRAWLING SEAPORT CITY WHERE MEN'S LIVES AND WOMEN'S CHARMS ARE CHEAPLY BOUGHT, AND BLOOD FLOWS AS FREELY AS WINE...

SOON...

THERE SHE IS! A FINER SHIP NEVER SAILED!

A ***PHOENICIAN GALLEY!*** I THOUGHT ***MGM*** HAD CORNERED THE MARKET ON THESE THINGS!

IT'S NOT EXACTLY THE ***QUEEN MARY,*** BUT IF YOU'RE WILLING TO RISK IT, I GUESS I--

UNNGH!

AS THE BLACK CLOUD OF OBLIVION SLOWLY LIFTS, MORGAN SEEMS TO HEAR TARA'S WARNING: "***ALWAYS*** EXPECT THE ***UNEXPECTED!***"

WELCOME ABOARD, ***SLAVE!*** ROW WELL AND LIVE.

AT THE TURNING OF THE TIDE, THE GRYFALCON PUTS OUT TO SEA, BEARING IN ITS HOLD A CERTAIN MAN WHO HAS HAD HIS FIRST TASTE OF THE SUFFERING AND DEGRADATION OF SLAVERY, AND FOUND IT BITTER INDEED...

HERE IN THE HOLD OF A SLAVE GALLEY, MORGAN FINDS THE ONE THING HE HAD GIVEN UP HOPE OF FINDING IN THIS SAVAGE LAND: A *FRIEND*...

...AND AT NIGHT, *MACHISTE*, THE SUN GOES DOWN AND THE SKY IS FILLED WITH STARS!

THEY *WOULD* HAVE TO CHAIN ME TO A *MADMAN!* STILL, YOU ASK SO MANY QUESTIONS AND KNOW SO LITTLE...

...I COULD ALMOST BELIEVE YOU *DO* COME FROM ANOTHER WORLD--

ARRGH!

NO TALKING, YOU BLACK SCUM!

MORGAN! WATCH OUT!

THANKS...

...BUT ALL YOU'VE DONE IS MAKE TROUBLE FOR YOURSELF!

THE BATTLE IS FIERCE, BUT BRIEF-- TWO IN CHAINS CANNOT STAND LONG AGAINST A SHIP'S COMPANY...

YOU'VE SHOWN GREAT SPIRIT! BUT SPIRIT MAKES FOR POOR SLAVES!

HANG THEM!

BUT BEFORE THE DEATH SENTENCE CAN BE CARRIED OUT...

DROGAR! LOOK!

RAIDERS! ALL HANDS TO ARMS! PREPARE FOR BATTLE!

THE FLEET PIRATE GALLEY SWIFTLY CLOSES WITH THE GRYFALCON! GRAPPLING HOOKS ARE SET AND THE SCREAMING HORDE ATTACKS...

AS THE FIRST OF THE RAIDERS COMES ABOARD, MORGAN SEES HIS CHANCE...

FREE ME!

BUT THE PIRATE HAS OTHER INTENTIONS...

HEY!

WE'LL SEE NO MERCY AT THE HANDS OF THESE DOGS! WE FIGHT OR DIE!

THE DECK QUICKLY BECOMES A WHIRLWIND OF FLASHING BLADES, AS THE PIRATE HORDE POURS OVER THE SIDE...

AND AT THE CENTER OF THE WHIRLWIND STAND TWO GALLANT MEN, THEIR DARTING SWORDS STRIKING LIKE SERPENTS AT ALL WHO COME WITHIN REACH!

IN THE FACE OF SUCH RESISTANCE, THE PIRATES ARE FINALLY REPELLED. THEIR SHIP AFLAME, THEY LIMP OFF TO LICK THEIR WOUNDS AND PONDER THE ADVANTAGES OF HONEST LABOR...

... AND MORGAN AND MACHISTE ARE ONCE AGAIN THE PRISONERS OF DROGAR, THE TERRIBLE...

BUT THEIR DESPERATE STAND AGAINST THE RAIDERS HAS NOT GONE UNNOTICED...

EXCELLENT FIGHTERS, DON'T YOU THINK? IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO STRETCH THEIR NECKS--

--GLADIATORS BRING SUCH HIGH PRICES!

TIME HANGS SUSPENDED--AS MOTIONLESS AS THE PERPETUAL NOON-DAY SUN THAT CASTS ITS LIGHT UPON THIS ENCHANTED WORLD AT THE EARTH'S CORE! WHETHER THE VOYAGE OF THE GRYFALCON ENCOMPASSES A DAY, A MONTH, OR A YEAR, NONE CAN SAY! IT MATTERS ONLY THAT THE CASTLE FORTRESS OF SHEBAL, TRAINER OF GLADIATORS, NOW LOOMS INTO VIEW...

MORGAN SOON LEARNS THAT IN THIS WORLD, THE MEASURE OF A MAN'S WORTH IS IN THE GOLD HE BRINGS ON THE AUCTION BLOCK...

...WITH MY OWN EYES, I HAVE SEEN THESE TWO SLAY FULLY A *HUNDRED MEN! FIFTY* PIECES OF GOLD!

MEN WITH THAT MUCH SPIRIT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO TRAIN! *THIRTY!*

KILL

KILL

UNDER THE SKILLED HANDS OF ***SHEBAL,*** HIMSELF A VETERAN OF THE ARENA, MORGAN AND MACHISTE BEGIN A STRENUOUS TRAINING ROUTINE DESIGNED TO MOLD THEM INTO FIGHTING MACHINES WITH ONE PURPOSE: TO FIGHT AND DIE IN THE ARENA! AT LEAST THE FOOD HERE IS ADEQUATE, AND THE GLADIATORS ENJOY THE LUXURY OF AN OCCASIONAL BATH! PHYSIQUES TOUGHENED BY LONG SERVICE IN THE SLAVE GALLEY ARE SOON HONED TO A RAZOR EDGE OF PERFECTION! THEY ARE TAUGHT TO KILL IN A MANNER THAT WILL BE AMUSING TO THE SPECTATORS. THEY ARE TAUGHT TO KILL WITH EVERY KNOWN WEAPON! THEY ARE TAUGHT TO KILL--!

KILL

KILL

KILL

THE CLATTER OF HOOVES HERALDS THE ARRIVAL OF A ROYAL VISITOR...

PRINCE ERIS! TO WHAT DO WE OWE THE HONOR--?

I HEARD THAT YOU HAVE ACQUIRED AN EXCEPTIONAL GROUP OF GLADIATORS! WE'VE COME FOR A BIT OF SPORT!

IT'S *MY* TURN TO MAKE THE SELECTION, *ERIS!* YOU PROMISED!

SHEBAL HAS COME TO HATE THESE PERIODIC VISITS-- THEY COST HIM DEARLY IN PRIDE AND MEN, ALL FOR THE SPORT OF THIS WASTREL...

...AND THIS ONE...

...AND *THESE* TWO! WHAT A MATCH! ONE DARK AS EBONY...

...THE OTHER, SILVER-HAIRED AND FAIR!

THOSE WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE SALUTE YOU!

MORGAN AND MACHISTE ARE TAKEN TO A SMALL ENCLOSURE TO AWAIT THEIR TURN IN THE ARENA...

KILL ME IF YOU CAN, MORGAN!

OR I WILL SURELY KILL YOU!

BEGIN!

GO AHEAD-- *FINISH* IT!

T.MEX

SUDDENLY, MORGAN EXPLODES IN FURY...

SLAY THEM!

HURRY, MORGAN! THE GUARDS ARE COMING!

AT LAST THE LOCK YIELDS, AND TWO HUNDRED BLOODTHIRSTY GLADIATORS POUR INTO THE ARENA...

LIKE A CRIMSON TIDE, THE GLADIATORS SWEEP ACROSS THE ARENA, CRUSHING ALL IN THEIR PATH...

BACK TO YOUR CAGES, *DOGS!*

NEVER! YOU'RE A GOOD TEACHER, SHEBAL...

...AND I'VE LEARNED MY LESSONS *WELL!*

LOOK HERE! THIS SNAKE TRIED TO SQUIRM FROM OUR GRASP!

LET'S SEE HOW LONG HE SQUIRMS ON THE END OF MY BLADE.

NO!

HE'S MINE!

WHERE DID YOU GET THIS?

I... I TOOK IT FROM A *SLAVE GIRL* I CAUGHT IN THE GREAT DESERT!

THIS *GIRL*... WHERE IS SHE *NOW!*

I SOLD HER... TO *KING DEIMOS* OF *THERA!*

YOU'RE LYING! DEIMOS IS A *HIGH PRIEST*, NOTHING MORE!

NO LONGER! HE CAME INTO POSSESSION OF THE *SCROLLS OF BLOOD*, CONTAINING *MAGIC SPELLS* BY WHICH HE CONTROLS MEN'S MINDS AND EVEN RAISES THE *DEAD* TO DO HIS BIDDING!

AND YOU PUT *TARA* IN THE HANDS OF THAT *MONSTER?*

THE BATTLE HAS BEEN BRIEF AND BLOODY! MORGAN RALLIES THE VICTORIOUS GLADIATORS IN THE COURTYARD...

HEAR ME! I HAVE JUST GIVEN YOU YOUR FREEDOM! I ASK *THIS* IN RETURN! FOLLOW ME NOW TO *THERA*, TO *CRUSH* THE TYRANT *DEIMOS!*

WE ARE BARELY *TWO HUNDRED MEN!* HOW CAN WE STAND AGAINST THE GARRISON AT THERA?

HE'S RIGHT!

WE WILL GROW IN NUMBER! WHEREVER THERE ARE MEN WILLING TO FIGHT FOR LIBERTY, THEY WILL RALLY TO OUR BANNER!

FARMERS AND SLAVES! WHAT WILL THEY USE FOR WEAPONS? PLOWS AND PITCH-FORKS AGAINST SWORDS AND ARROWS?

FARMERS AND SLAVES... ***YES!*** FOR WHO ***BETTER*** KNOWS THE BITTERNESS OF OPPRESSION?

AS FOR ***WEAPONS,*** ***I*** WILL BUILD YOU WEAPONS SUCH AS YOU HAVE NEVER ***DREAMED*** OF! ***SIEGE TOWERS*** TO BREACH CITY WALLS... ***CATAPULTS*** AND ***BALLISTAE*** TO HURL FIRE AND DEATH AMONG THE ENEMY...***CROSSBOWS*** TO PENETRATE THE FINEST ARMOR! ALL THESE AND ***MORE*** IF YOU WILL FOLLOW ME!

I AM WITH YOU, ***MORGAN!*** YOU ARE MY FRIEND! BUT WHAT CAN YOU OFFER THE OTHERS?

THERA IS A RICH CITY! THERE WILL BE ***GOLD*** AND ***PLUNDER*** FOR ALL! BUT I OFFER SOMETHING FAR ***GREATER...***

...I OFFER YOU THE CHANCE TO ***DIE FREE MEN!***

The End

THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS
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32482
THE WARLORD
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HE'S BACK! THE MIGHTIEST WARRIOR OF THEM ALL!
MIKE GRELL
J-4333

IT IS THE MISFORTUNE OF MANKIND THAT GREED AND HATE AND LUST FOR POWER ARE INHERENT IN THE HUMAN ANIMAL, FOR THERE IS A WORLD BEYOND OUR WORLD... A WORLD OF ETERNAL SUNLIGHT THAT MIGHT BE A PARADISE, BUT FOR THE PRESENCE OF MAN!

BY RIGHT OF *CONQUEST* I HEREBY CLAIM YOUR LANDS AND LIVES...

...IN THE NAME OF *DEIMOS, KING OF THER--*

AAAARRG

BUT EVEN THE *IRON FIST* OF THE *OPPRESSOR* CAN BE SEVERED BY THE *SWORD* OF THE *LIBERATOR!*

The WARLORD

WAR GODS of SKARTARIS

written and illustrated by
MIKE GRELL

colored by
CARL GAFFORD

edited by
JOE ORLANDO

IN THE SPACE OF A HEARTBEAT, THE AIR IS FILLED WITH THE RINGING CLASH OF STEEL UPON STEEL. THIS IS TRUE COMBAT... NOT MERELY ARMY AGAINST ARMY, BUT MAN AGAINST MAN. *PERSONAL* COMBAT! AND AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE BATTLE RIDES A MAN DESTINED TO BECOME A LEGEND. ONE HAS ONLY TO WITNESS THE FEROCITY WITH WHICH HE WIELDS HIS GLEAMING BLADE TO KNOW THAT HE IS THE ONE MEN CALL **THE WARLORD!**

AND THEN IT IS OVER, AS SWIFTLY AS IT BEGAN. THE DIN OF BATTLE IS REPLACED BY A STRANGE SILENCE BROKEN ONLY BY THE SOUND OF SCAVENGERS ALREADY COME TO FEED...

HERE! WHAT'S ***WRONG*** WITH YOU PEOPLE?

THIS IS A POOR WELCOME FOR MEN WHO'VE JUST FOUGHT FOR YOU!

YOUR PARDON, SIR, BUT ***ONE*** CONQUEROR IS MUCH THE SAME AS ANY OTHER!

WE COME AS ***LIBERATORS***, NOT ***CONQUERORS!***

BUT YOU HAVE BROUGHT THE WRATH OF ***DEIMOS*** UPON US!

WE MARCH ***AGAINST*** DEIMOS! IF THERE ARE ANY ***MEN*** AMONG YOU, THEY ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US!

WE WILL CAMP HERE WHILE MY MEN TRAIN YOU TO FIGHT LIKE GLADIATORS.

MEN AREN'T THE ***ONLY*** ONES WHO CAN FIGHT!

I KNOW IT ***WELL!*** A ***WOMAN*** TAUGHT ***ME*** HOW TO USE A SWORD!

WE WELCOME ***ANYONE*** WHO WILL FIGHT FOR FREEDOM.

A SHORT TIME LATER, A SOLITARY FIGURE ROAMS THE WINDSWEPT BATTLEFIELD. WHO IS THIS MAN? WHERE DID HE COME FROM? THE ANSWER BEGINS IN THE SKIES OVER RUSSIA, WHEN LT. COLONEL *TRAVIS MORGAN'S* PLANE WAS DAMAGED BY AN ANTI-AIRCRAFT MISSILE...

IN AN EFFORT TO ESCAPE ACROSS THE NORTH POLE, HE ENTERED THE VAST OPENING LEADING TO THE WORLD AT THE CENTER OF THE EARTH: *SKARTARIS*...

HERE HE FOUND A PRIMEVAL JUNGLE, WHERE BEASTS FROM THE DAWN OF CREATION STILL WALK THE EARTH...

HE FOUND BEAUTY ALSO, IN THE PERSON OF *TARA*, THE LOVELY SAVAGE WHOSE MEMORY NOW FILLED HIM WITH A STRANGE LONGING...

CAPTURED BY THERAN SOLDIERS, THEY WERE TAKEN TO A FABULOUS CITY, WHERE MORGAN WAS WELCOMED AS A GOD BUT MORGAN INCURRED THE WRATH OF *DEIMOS*, THE HIGH PRIEST, AND HE AND TARA WERE FORCED TO FLEE FOR THEIR LIVES.

THEY SOON FELL INTO THE HANDS OF SLAVE RAIDERS, MORGAN HELPED TARA ESCAPE, BUT HE WAS RECAPTURED AND STRUNG UP TO DIE BENEATH THE BLAZING NOONDAY SUN. HIS LIFE WAS SPARED BY A PIRATE CAPTAIN, WHO FIRST MADE HIM A GALLEY SLAVE, AND THEN SOLD HIM TO A TRAINER OF GLADIATORS.

FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT OF A VISITING DIGNITARY, MORGAN WAS PITTED AGAINST HIS NEW FRIEND, MACHISTE, IN THE ARENA OF DEATH, BUT WHEN THE DEATH SIGNAL WAS GIVEN, MORGAN SAW THAT THE PRINCE WAS WEARING THE WRISTWATCH HE HAD GIVEN TO TARA. A BLOODY REBELLION FOLLOWED, WITH MORGAN LEADING THE GLADIATORS TO FREEDOM.

MORGAN LEARNED THAT TARA HAD BEEN CAPTURED AND SOLD TO DEIMOS, WHO, WITH THE AID OF MYSTERIOUS WRITINGS CALLED *THE SCROLLS OF BLOOD*, HAD RISEN TO THE THRONE OF THERA.

NOW MORGAN'S EVER-GROWING ARMY WAS DRIVING TOWARDS THERA, AND A FINAL CONFRONTATION WITH THE DEVIL-PRIEST...

THE MEN ARE GRUMBLING, MORGAN! YOU PROMISED THEM GOLD, YET AS OUR NUMBERS *GROW*, EACH MAN'S SHARE GROWS *SMALLER!*

GOLD! HAVE THEY FORGOTTEN WHY WE *STARTED* THIS WAR?

ONCE THEY HAD THEIR *FREEDOM*, THEY FORGOT HOW *PRECIOUS* IT WAS!

IF *YOU* OR ANYONE ELSE DOESN'T LIKE THE WAY I RUN THINGS, YOU CAN PACK YOUR GEAR AND *GET OUT!*

DON'T TEST OUR FRIENDSHIP, MORGAN! I *KNOW* YOU'RE IN THIS FOR THAT *GIRL!*

BUT THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN THAT, ISN'T THERE? A HANDFUL OF MEN COULD STEAL HER FROM THE CITY *EASILY!* WHAT *DRIVES* YOU, MORGAN?

THESE PEOPLE DESERVE A CHANCE TO KNOW FREEDOM! BUT YOU'RE RIGHT, MACHISTE -- IT GOES *BEYOND* THAT!

THERE'S SOMETHING I *READ* ONCE! IT WAS WRITTEN ON THE WALL OF A *BUNKER* IN *SAIGON* --

--"*YOU HAVE NEVER LIVED UNTIL YOU'VE ALMOST DIED! FOR THOSE WHO FIGHT FOR IT, LIFE HAS A FLAVOR THE PROTECTED WILL NEVER KNOW!*"

GOD HELP ME -- *I LOVE THIS!*

COME ON! LET'S GET BACK TO CAMP!

AS THE RIDERS TOP A HILL, THE WONDEROUS WORLD OF SKARTARIS REVEALS ANOTHER OF HER MANY MYSTERIES...

A *UNICORN!*

WHAT A *PRIZE* HE'LL MAKE!

DON'T BE A FOOL, MORGAN! YOU'LL *NEVER* CATCH HIM!

THIRTY PIECES OF GOLD SAY I *CAN!* YOU JUST GET BACK TO CAMP AND LEAVE HIM TO ME!

CAUGHT UP IN THE HEAT OF THE CHASE, MORGAN FORGETS TARA'S WARNING THAT IN THIS LAND AT THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, ONE MUST *ALWAYS* EXPECT...

...THE UNEXPECTED!

IS IT COURAGE... OR FEAR... THAT TURNS A MAN INSTANTLY INTO A DESTRUCTIVE FORCE? WHILE A LESSER MAN WOULD STILL BE QUESTIONING HIS SANITY, MORGAN ERUPTS IN FURY, HACKING AND SLASHING AT THE NIGHTMARE FACES THAT SEEM TO SWIRL IN A BLOOD-RED HAZE...

YET, FOR EVERY LOATHSOME LIZARDMAN THAT FALLS TO HIS BLADE, ANOTHER RISES UP TO TAKE ITS PLACE...

...AND THE BATTLE IS SWIFTLY ENDED!

AS NUMBING BLACKNESS SWEEPS OVER HIM, MORGAN WONDERS WHAT NIGHTMARES WILL AWAIT HIM WHEN HE WAKES... *IF* HE WAKES...

THESE RUINS... LIKE NOTHING I'VE EVER SEEN--!

OH-OH! HERE COME THE UGLIES!

HE SOON HAS HIS ANSWER...

UNNGH! HOGTIED AGAIN! THIS IS GETTING TO BE A HABIT!

THESE CREATURES ARE AS BAD OFF AS THEIR CITY-- IT'S ALMOST LIKE *REVERSE EVOLUTION!*

I WONDER WHAT THEY HAVE PLAN--!

WAIT! THAT SHADOW ON THE GROUND...

...IT'S MY PLANE!!

YES, TRAVIS MORGAN! THE *FATES* HAVE WOVEN ANOTHER THREAD INTO THE TAPESTRY OF YOUR DESTINY!

O, METAXA, MIGHTY *WAR GOD* WHO CAME FROM THE SKIES TO DESTROY THE TEMPLE OF THE *OLD GOD*...

...HEAR THE PRAYERS OF YOUR CHOSEN PEOPLE!

I'LL BE-- THEY'RE *WORSHIPPING* THE PLANE!

WHEN IT CRASHED, IT MUST HAVE DESTROYED THEIR TEMPLE...

...AND THEY THINK IT'S SOME KIND OF *GOD!*

...BY THE *BLOOD* AND *ENTRAILS* OF THIS *SACRIFICE*, MAKE US MIGHTY IN WAR!

LOOK, SLIME-FACE, IF YOU THINK I'M JUST GOING TO HANG HERE WHILE YOU SPILL MY *GUTS*...

...YOU'RE IN FOR A *SURPRISE!*

AND BEFORE THE CRUEL BLADE CAN STRIKE, THE EARTH TREMBLES... AND *MOVES!*

INDEED, A MAN LIKE TRAVIS MORGAN DOES NOT EASILY RELINQUISH HIS HOLD ON LIFE...

AAAIIIIEEEEE! THE OLD ONE COMES!

BURSTING FORTH FROM ITS LONG IMPRISONMENT BENEATH THE RUINED TEMPLE COMES A LIVING *NIGHTMARE*--

--A GOD RAGING WITH JEALOUSY...

...AND *HUNGER!*

AAARRRRG!!!

FROM THE SHELTER OF THE JUNGLE, A LONE RIDER WATCHES A SCENE OF BLOODY CHAOS...

BUT THIS IS NO IDLE SPECTATOR...

MACHISTE...!

...WATCH OUT!!

MOVING WITH DESPERATE SPEED, MORGAN VAULTS TO THE COCKPIT OF HIS AIRCRAFT...

ONLY ONE CHANCE AGAINST THAT THING--

I HOPE THAT *SURVIVAL KIT'S* STILL INTACT!

THE HISSING SCREAMS OF THE SERPENT-GOD ARE SUDDENLY MINGLED WITH THE ROAR OF A .44 MAGNUM...

SURVIVAL KIT

BUT THE RESULTS ARE NOT WHAT MORGAN EXPECTED...

ALL I'VE DONE IS ATTRACT ATTENTION TO *MYSELF!*

OKAY, ***UGLY!*** IF YOU'VE GOT SUCH A BIG *APPETITE*...

DANGER E.W.O. EJECTOR

...*CHEW ON THAT!*

FOR ONCE I'M *GLAD* YOU DIDN'T FOLLOW ORDERS!

YOU SAVED MY LIFE!

DON'T *FLATTER* YOURSELF! I DID IT BECAUSE YOU OWE ME THIRTY PIECES OF *GOLD!*

EPILOGUE

JUST LOOK AT THESE RUINS, MACHISTE! THE LIZARDMEN COULD *NEVER* HAVE BUILT ANYTHING LIKE THIS!

I HAVE SEEN *MANY* CITIES LIKE THIS-- *ALL* IN *RUINS!*

NO ONE KNOWS *WHO* THE BUILDERS WERE... ONLY THAT THEY DIED OFF IN SOME DIM, FORGOTTEN AGE.

PERHAPS THERE WAS A *PLAGUE!*

--OR A *WAR!*

WELL, WHOEVER THEY WERE, THEY MUST HAVE BEEN A *MAGNIFICENT* RACE!

COME ON, MORGAN! WE HAD BETTER LEAVE BEFORE THE LIZARDMEN RETURN.

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT! BUT, WHEN WE'VE FINISHED WITH *DEIMOS,* I'D LIKE TO COME BACK AND *EXPLORE* THIS PLACE!

WHO KNOWS *WHAT* I MIGHT FIND?

THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS
savage showdown in the lost world of
THE WARLORD
NO. 4
JAN.
32482
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
YOU TOOK THE WOMAN I LOVE, DEIMOS--
--AND ALL THE FIENDS OF HELL WON'T STOP ME FROM GETTING HER BACK!
MIKE GRELL

FADE IN! AMID THE TOWERING JUNGLES OF THE TIMELESS LAND CALLED *SKARTARIS*, THE CITY OF *THERA* THRUSTS ITS GLEAMING TOWERS TOWARD THE ETERNAL NOON-DAY SUN! ONCE ITS STREETS WERE FILLED WITH THE MUSIC OF LAUGHTER! BUT NOW THE MUSIC HAS DISAPPEARED, FOR A *MONSTER* SITS ON THE THRONE OF THERA!

DEIMOS, ONCE A HIGH PRIEST OF THE THERAN *SUN GOD*, HE SEIZED POWER WITH THE AID OF SINISTER WRITINGS KNOWN AS *THE SCROLLS OF BLOOD! DEIMOS*, WHOSE VERY NAME MEANS *TERROR!*

THERE IS A SIGN ON THE *GATE OF HELL, TARA*... IT SAYS: "*ABANDON HOPE, ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE!*"

I SAY TO YOU, "*ABANDON HOPE, TARA*... THERE IS *NO* RESCUE FOR Y--!"

MASTER! WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!

FOOL! HOW DARE YOU INTERRUPT ME!

B-BUT, SIRE, AN ARMY OF *THOUSANDS* IS POURING OUT OF THE JUNGLE... AND THEY FLY THE BANNER OF THE MAN CALLED--

AAIIIEEEEE!

1984 J-H

The WARLORD

"DUEL of the TITANS"

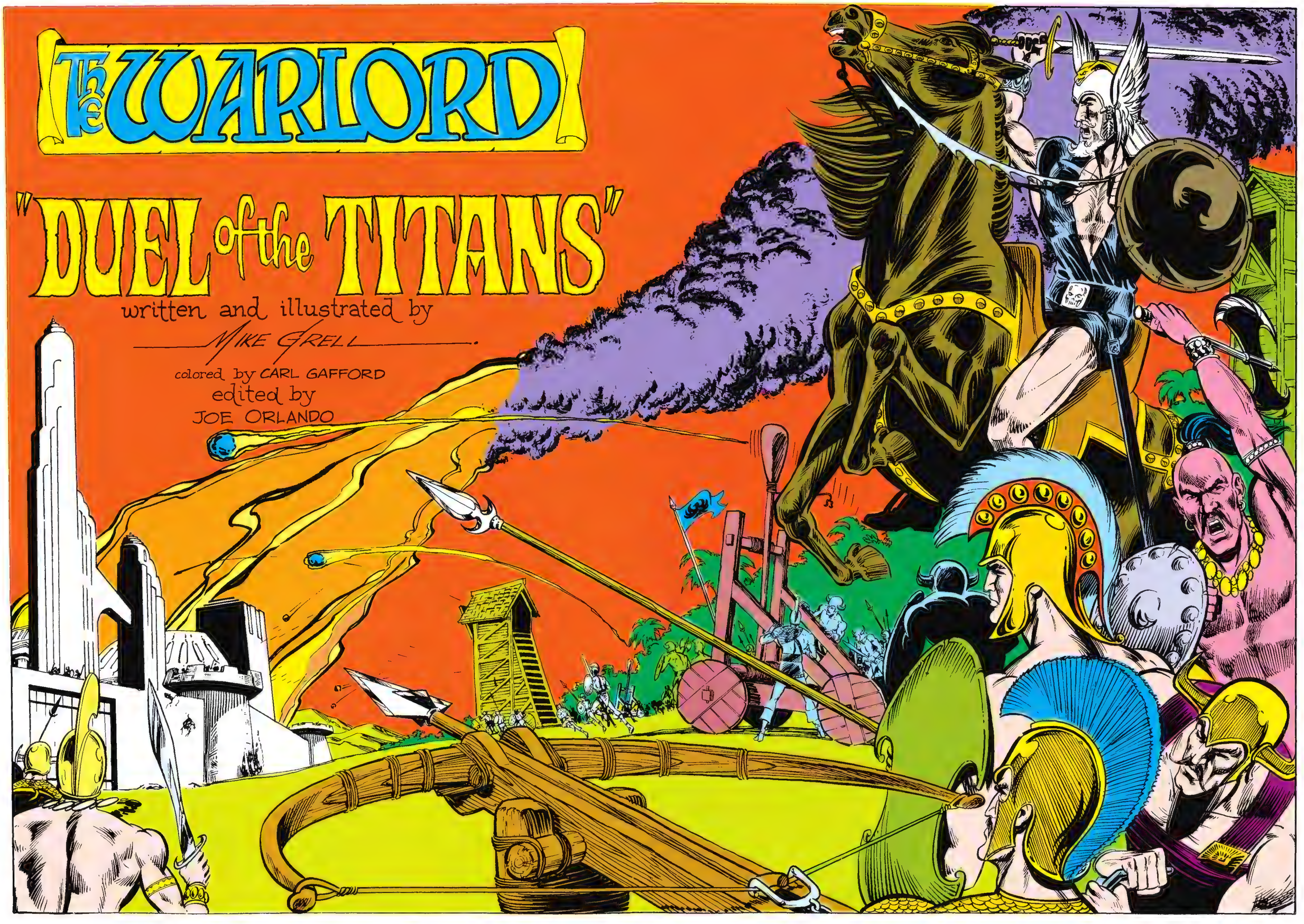
written and illustrated by

MIKE GRELL

colored by CARL GAFFORD

edited by

JOE ORLANDO



The Warlord!

A NAME WRITTEN IN BLOOD AND FIRE ACROSS A SAVAGE WORLD WHERE ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE!

IN ANOTHER WORLD, ANOTHER *LIFE*, THIS WAS *LT. COLONEL TRAVIS MORGAN, U.S. AIR FORCE!*

NOW HE IS... *LEGEND!*

MOVE UP THE SIEGE TOWERS! DRAW THE ENEMY AWAY FROM THE GATES!

SAVE *DEIMOS* FOR ME! I'LL FEED HIS STINKING CARCASS TO THE *VULTURES!*

TRUE TO HIS WORD, *MORGAN* HAS EQUIPPED HIS ARMY OF FORMER SLAVES AND GLADIATORS WITH THE ULTIMATE IN "*MODERN*" WAR MACHINERY...

...SUPERBLY ACCURATE *CROSSBOWS*...

...*CATAPULTS* TO HURL *FIRE* AND *DEATH* UPON THE ENEMY...

...AND *SIEGE TOWERS* TO BREACH THE FORTRESS WALLS...

MEANWHILE, IN A PALACE TOWER HIGH ABOVE THE BLOODY BATTLE...

AT LAST! I KNEW HE WOULD APPEAR!

I MUST SAY I EXPECTED IT TO TAKE HIM LONGER, BUT I *KNEW* HE *WOULD COME!* YOU SEE, I HAVE SOMETHING HE *WANTS*...

...*YOU!*

NO MAN CAN STAND AGAINST THE POWER OF THE *SCROLLS OF BLOOD*, AND *I, DEIMOS,* HOLD THE *SECRET* OF THAT POWER!

MORGAN IS NOT *LIKE* OTHER MEN!

BEWARE, DEVIL! THE HOUR OF *YOUR* DEATH IS UPON YOU!

MOMENTS LATER, A SINISTER FIGURE APPEARS ON A BALCONY...

MORGAN, LOOK!

DEIMOS! HE'S GOT TARA WITH HIM! AND LOOK WHAT HE'S HOLDING--

--ONE OF THE SCROLLS OF BLOOD!

THE DEVIL-PRIEST MUTTERS A STRANGE INCANTATION, AND THE ODD-LOOKING DEVICE BEFORE HIM BEGINS TO GLOW. A COLUMN OF THICK, SULFUROUS SMOKE SLOWLY RISES...

...AND BEGINS TO TAKE FORM!

MY GOD! IT CAN'T BE REAL! IT'S LIKE SOME NIGHTMARE!

IT IS REAL, MORGAN! AND IT'S THE END FOR US! WE'LL DO WELL TO SAVE OURSELVES NOW!

NO! I LED THESE MEN INTO THIS, AND I'LL STAND WITH THEM...

...OR DIE WITH THEM!

SR-11 SELF DESTRUCT MECHANISM DANGER! HIGH EXPLOSIVE!

AHH! YOUR *LOVER* COMES! LIKE A FLY INTO THE SPIDER'S WEB HE *HURRIES* TO HIS *DEATH!*

GOT TO MAKE THE *FIRST SHOT* COUNT! I WON'T HAVE TIME FOR ANOTH--!

OH, GOD! NO!!

TARA IS IN MY LINE OF FIRE!

A MOMENT'S HESITATION... A CRUCIAL INSTANT OF INDECISION...

BUT DESPERATE MEN TAKE DESPERATE CHANCES...

THAT WEIRD *CONTRAPTION*-- SOMEHOW *IT'S* THE CAUSE OF THIS!

A .44 MAGNUM SLUG RIPS THROUGH THE SINISTER DEVICE, EXPLODING IN A SHOWER OF SPARKS...

...AND THE *DEMON HAND* CLUTCHING MORGAN TURNS ONCE AGAIN TO HARMLESS SMOKE TO BE BORNE AWAY ON THE WIND!

ARCHERS! CUT HIM DOWN!

A THOUSAND PIECES OF *GOLD* TO THE MAN WHO BRINGS ME *MORGAN'S HEAD!*

DODGING A BARRAGE OF FEATHERED DEATH WITH PANTHER-LIKE AGILITY, MORGAN MAKES HIS WAY ALONG THE CITY WALL...

...TO THE GREAT WOODEN GATES THAT BAR THE WAY INTO THE CITY!

THE PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE COMPOUND KNOWN AS "H.E." (HIGH EXPLOSIVE) IS *TEN TIMES* MORE POWERFUL THAN *DYNAMITE!*

DANGER HIGH EXPLOSIVE

THE .44 *AUTOMAG* FIRES A 240 GRAIN SLUG THAT DELIVERS NEARLY A *TON* OF PURE, JOLTING ENERGY.

WHEN THE TWO COME TOGETHER...

DINK

...ALL *HELL* BREAKS LOOSE!

BEFORE THE LAST ECHOES OF THE BLAST HAVE DIED AWAY, MORGAN CHARGES THROUGH THE SHATTERED GATES WITH A HOARD OF BLOODTHIRSTY GLADIATORS HARD ON HIS HEELS...

MORGAN!

TRAVIS MORGAN, A *CIVILIZED* MAN TURNED *SAVAGE* THROUGH A TWIST OF *FATE*...

AAARRRRGHH!

...HAS JUST GONE BERSERK!

A SWIFT PULL OF A CONCEALED LEVER, AND A SECRET PASSAGE OPENS IN THE TEMPLE FLOOR. DEIMOS IS WITHIN A HEART-BEAT OF FREEDOM WHEN A CHILLING VOICE FILLS THE TEMPLE...

DEIMOS!!

LET HER GO!

AS FOR *YOU*, THE ONLY PLACE YOU'RE GOING...

...IS *HELL!*

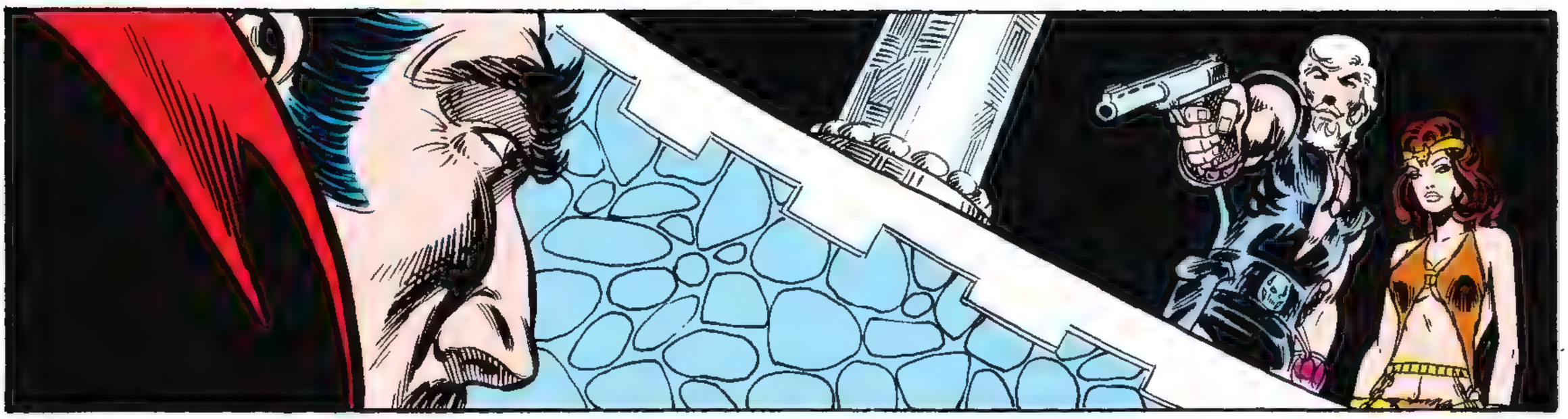
MORGAN! THE CITY IS *OURS!*

WITHOUT THEIR *DEVIL-PRIEST* AND HIS *BAG OF TRICKS*, THE GARRISON HAS *NO STOMACH* FOR BATTLE!

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH THIS PIECE OF *SCUM!*

I WILL BE *NO MAN'S SLAVE!* GRANT ME A *FIGHT*-- *FREEDOM OR DEATH!*

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, MORGAN! *KILL HIM WHERE HE STANDS!*



I CAN'T, TARA -- NOT LIKE THIS! I'D BE NO BETTER THAN HE!

PUT OUT THE TORCHES!
IT IS FITTING THAT THIS PRINCE OF EVIL SHOULD DIE IN DARKNESS!

AS YOU WILL, MORGAN! WE MEET IN THE CENTER!

WE MEET...

...WHERE WE MEET!

AND SO THEY BEGIN, SENSES STRAINING FOR THE SLIGHTEST SOUND-- THE SLIGHTEST SMELL-- THE SLIGHTEST *PRE-MONITION* OF DANGER...

MOVING WITH CAT-LIKE STEALTH, ADRENALIN PUMPING, BREATH HELD, WAITING TO *STRIKE*...

AND WHEN THE BATTLE IS ENGAGED, IT IS WITH *ANIMAL FEROCITY*...

...A *HAIL* OF BLOWS STRUCK AND PARRIED WITH LIGHTNING FURY!

BUT NOT *ALL* THE THE BLOWS CAN BE EVADED...

IT IS WELL FOR DEIMOS THAT HE CANNOT SEE THE MAN WHO FACES HIM...

...FOR, WHERE ONCE STOOD AN ORDINARY MAN...

...THERE NOW STANDS A *SAVAGE!*

WITH *INHUMAN FURY,* MORGAN RAINS BLOW AFTER BLOW UPON THE HIGH PRIEST OF INFAMY...

...FORCING HIM *BACKWARD*...

...EVER *BACKWARD*...

...UNTIL HE STANDS BATHED IN THE BRILLIANCE OF THE *ETERNAL SUN* OF *SKARTARIS!*

IN THE WHISTLING PASSAGE
OF MORGAN'S DESCENDING BLADE CAN
BE HEARD THE SHRIEKS OF THE *DAMNED,*
SWINGING WIDE THE *GATES OF HELL* TO WELCOME
DEIMOS, KEEPER OF THE *SCROLLS OF BLOOD,* TO *ETERNAL DARKNESS!*

EPILOGUE

HAND IN HAND, MORGAN AND TARA STEP ONCE AGAIN INTO THE SWEET WARMTH OF ETERNAL SUN...

WHAT NOW, MORGAN? YOU HAVE BUT TO SPEAK AND EVERY MAN'S SWORD IS YOURS TO COMMAND!

THE *DEMON* IS DEAD, AND *TARA* IS SAFE! *MY QUEST IS ENDED!*

BUT THE FIGHT FOR *FREEDOM MUST GO ON!*

A WISER MAN THAN I ONCE SAID THAT *ALL PEOPLE* HAVE THE *RIGHT* TO *LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS!*

LET THE WORD BE SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE LAND--WHILE THERE ARE MEN WILLING TO *FIGHT* FOR *FREEDOM*, THE *HAND* OF *TYRANNY SHALL NOT PREVAIL!*

AS FOR *MYSELF--!*

AS FOR *YOU*, MORGAN, YOU AND I SHALL RESUME OUR INTERRUPTED JOURNEY TO MY HOMELAND, *SHAMBALLAH!*

AYE! AND PERHAPS I'LL *UNRAVEL* A FEW OF THE *MYSTERIES* OF THIS STRANGE WORLD!

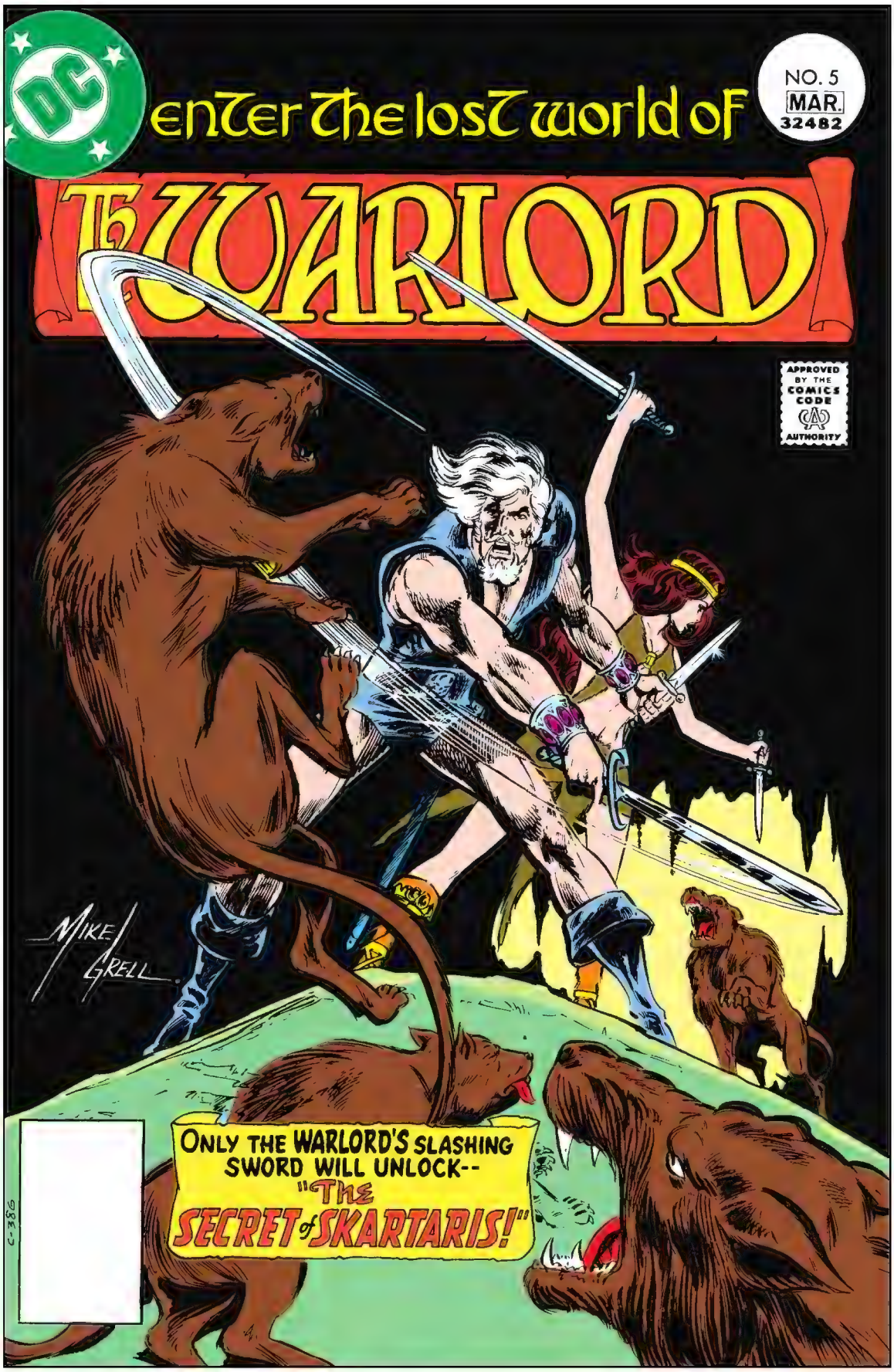
MYSTERIES? FUNNY YOU SHOULD SAY THAT, TRAVIS MORGAN, FOR THE ANSWER YOU SEEK LIES NOT AHEAD, BUT *BEHIND* YOU IN AN EVER-SPREADING POOL OF BLOOD...

TECH ORDER 47 of 100

TECHNICAL OPERATIONS MANUAL COMPUTER NO.

B-100-D

SOLID LIGHT HOLOGRAM PROJECTOR APPARATUS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enter the lost world of
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32482
THE WARLORD
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MIKE GRELL
ONLY THE WARLORD'S SLASHING SWORD WILL UNLOCK--
"THE SECRET of SKARTARIS!"
C-386

THE TIME IS *NOON*--IN A WORLD OF *ETERNAL* NOON. THE UNBLINKING ORB OF *SKARTARIS'* SMOLDERING SUN STARES DOWN ON THE REMNANTS OF WHAT WAS ONCE THE MIGHTIEST ARMY IN THIS FABLED WORLD AT THE EARTH'S CORE...AN ARMY OF *SLAVES* WHO STRUCK OFF THEIR SHACKLES AND ROSE TO FOLLOW ONE MAN IN A WAR AGAINST *TYRANNY*.

IT IS THE AFTERMATH OF *VICTORY*. THE ONCE-MIGHTY ARMY HAS DWINDLED TO A MERE HANDFUL OF WARRIORS EN ROUTE TO TO THEIR HOMELANDS AS *FREE MEN*...

ARE YOU CERTAIN YOU WON'T CHANGE YOUR MIND AND COME WITH US? TARA HAS PROMISED US A WARM WELCOME IN HER HOMELAND, AND WE COULD USE ANOTHER STOUT SWORD ARM ALONG THE WAY.

I *HAVE* A HOME, MORGAN. AND THERE ARE MATTERS THERE WHICH HAVE BEEN TOO LONG UNSETTLED. BUT IF YOU SHOULD EVER NEED ME ASK FOR ME ANYWHERE IN *KIRO*. I'M SOMEWHAT... *NOTORIOUS* THERE!

FAREWELL, TRAVIS MORGAN!

J-4526

THERE GOES THE MOST *STUBBORN* MAN I EVER MET. THAT *HARD-HEADED MULE* NEVER *DID* FOLLOW ORDERS--ALWAYS HAD TO DO THINGS *HIS* WAY!

I KNOW, MORGAN. I SHALL MISS HIM *TOO!*

YEAH. SAY, HOW FAR IS IT TO YOUR HOME, ANYWAY?

SHAMBALLAH LIES BEYOND THE GREAT *FIRE MOUNTAIN*, IN THE *FOREST OF EBONDAR!*

I'LL BE GLAD TO SEE *TREES* AGAIN! THIS *WASTELAND* GIVES ME THE *CREEPS!* TOO MANY PLACES FOR AN *AMBUSH!*

The WARLORD

Written and illustrated by
MIKE GRELL

WITH A HIDEOUS SCREAM, THE *TYRANT LIZARD* TURNS FROM ITS INTERRUPTED FEAST...

HOLD STILL, YOU CURSED NAG! I-- OOHHH!

TARA!!

GOT YOU!!

MORGAN! YOU FOOL!! YOU'LL *NEVER* OUTRUN THAT THING CARRYING *BOTH* OF US!

I'M NOT EVEN GOING TO *TRY* TO OUTRUN IT!

I'M GONNA *OUTCLIMB* IT! *HANG ON!!*

WITH SPEED BORN OF *DESPERATION*, MORGAN CLIMBS THE SHEER GRANITE WALL AND IS QUICKLY...

...*OUT OF REACH!* BUT WHAT ABOUT THE *OTHERS?*

I'VE ALREADY THOUGHT ABOUT THAT!

GIVE ME A HAND WITH THIS BOULDER! IF WE CAN... JUST START IT... *MOVING--!*

MUSCLES *STRAIN*...TENDONS *CRACK*... AND SLOWLY THE *MASSIVE MONOLITH* BEGINS...

...TO *MOVE!*

BENEATH TONS OF HURTLING ROCK, A *JURASSIC AGE JUGGERNAUT* KEEPS AN APPOINTMENT WITH DEATH... *135 MILLION YEARS LATE!*

I'LL SAY THIS FOR LIFE IN SKARTARIS! *IT'S NOT DULL!!*

MORGAN, LOOK! THE ROCK SLIDE UNCOVERED A *CAVE!*

NO, NOT A *CAVE-- A DOORWAY!*

THESE DESIGNS... LIKE NOTHING I'VE EVER SEEN! LET'S GO INSIDE!

SHOULDN'T WE WAIT FOR THE MEN TO REJOIN US?

NO, BY THE TIME THEY GET THEIR HORSES UNDER CONTROL, WE'LL BE IN AND *OUT* OF HERE.

YOU'LL SOON KNOW HOW WRONG YOU ARE, TRAVIS MORGAN, FOR BEYOND THIS PORTAL LIES...

THE SECRET OF SKARTARIS

MORGAN! WHAT *IS* THIS PLACE?

I'M NOT SURE, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE SOME SORT OF *COMPUTER CENTER!*

BUT THAT'S *IMPOSSIBLE!* *WHO* COULD HAVE *BUILT* SUCH A SETUP? HOW DID IT GET HERE... *BURIED* IN THE ROCK FOR *COUNTLESS* AGES?

CALL IT FATE--CALL IT CHANCE--BUT, WHEN MORGAN SET HIS HELMET DOWN ON THE CONTROL PANEL, A *BUTTON* WAS *PUSHED*--A *CIRCUIT COMPLETED*...

...AND THE INCREDIBLE APPARATUS BEFORE HIM, THOUGH LONG UNUSED, IS STILL *VERY MUCH*...

...*WORKING*...

MY GOD!! IT'S STILL *OPERATING!*

HISTORICAL DATA REQUESTED FROM *OMEGA* INDEX TO FOLLOW...

MORGAN AND TARA STAND IN SPEECHLESS WONDER AS THE ANCIENT TELESCREEN CRACKLES TO LIFE...

IN THE 32ND YEAR OF THE REIGN OF KING THORVALL, THERE CAME A GREAT *CATACLYSM*-- THE SHINING CONTINENT OF *ATLANTIS* SANK BENEATH THE HUNGRY WAVES OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN...

THE LAND THAT WAS ONCE THE GLORY OF THE WORLD LAY CRUSHED BENEATH THE SWIRLING EMERALD WATERS...

BUT THIS WAS NOT THE END OF THE ATLANTEAN *CIVILIZATION*...

ATLANTEAN SCIENTISTS HAD *FORETOLD* OF THE GREAT UPHEAVAL. ALTHOUGH MOST SCOFFED AT THE PREDICTION OF DOOM, THORVALL SENT OUT EXPEDITIONS TO THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH TO SEEK OUT AND COLONIZE NEW LANDS, THAT THE RACE MIGHT SURVIVE...

BLOWN FAR NORTHWARD BY A GREAT STORM, THE EXPEDITION UNDER COMMAND OF GENERAL RUGERO DISCOVERED WARM AIR CURRENTS IN THE ICE-BOUND SEAS AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD. CONTINUING ONWARD THEY ENTERED A VAST OPENING IN THE EARTH AND FOUND THE FABULOUS WORLD OF *SKARTARIS*, GREEN AND GLORIOUS BENEATH AN ETERNAL SUN WHICH HANGS IN THE EXACT CENTER OF THIS *WORLD TURNED INSIDE OUT.*

SKARTARIS, WHERE SAURIAN CREATURES FROM THE DAWN OF TIME STILL LIVE-- PROTECTED FROM THE RAVAGES OF TIME BY AN ENVIRONMENT THAT NEVER ALTERS. ANIMALS EVOLVED MUCH THE SAME AS ON THE OUTER CRUST, BUT THE GIANT REPTILES REMAIN UNCHANGED -- TWO HUNDRED MILLION YEARS OF EVOLUTION EXISTING SIDE BY SIDE IN A PRIMEVAL FOREST.

IN A WORLD OF SAVAGERY, THE ATLANTEANS ALSO FOUND A WORLD OF BEAUTY WHERE WILD FRUIT AND GAME ABOUNDED...

HERE THEY RAISED THEIR CITIES.

AND THE MOST GLORIOUS OF ALL WAS THE GOLDEN CITY OF *SHAMBALLAH!*

IN SKARTARIS, THERE IS NO *NIGHT* TO MARK THE PASSING OF DAYS. FREED FROM THE BONDAGE OF TIME, MEN FOUND THAT THEY WERE ABLE TO GO TREMENDOUS PERIODS WITHOUT SLEEP-- TO REMAIN ACTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE LONGER WITHOUT FATIGUE. ATLANTEAN CIVILIZATION WAS ADVANCED, BUT THE *SKARTARANS* QUICKLY SURPASSED THEIR ANCESTORS. NOTHING WAS BEYOND THEIR REACH.

THEIR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT WAS THE CONSTRUCTION OF A GIGANTIC COMPUTER DEEP BENEATH THE CITY OF SHAMBALLAH. BURIED IN A MOUNTAIN OF SOLID GRANITE, THIS *MILE-SQUARE* UNIT WAS THE CENTRAL CONTROL FOR VIRTUALLY EVERY MECHANICAL DEVICE IN SKARTARIS. IT ALSO SUPPLIED *POWER* FROM AN UNLIMITED SOURCE: THE *ETERNAL SUN* OF SKARTARIS.

AND THEN THE *UNSPEAKABLE* HAPPENED. *WAR!* SKARTARIS HAD BEEN DIVIDED INTO CITY-STATES AND WERE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS OVER THE USUAL PETTY HUMAN SQUABBLES THAT HAVE ALWAYS MARKED THAT RACE. WHEN THE ATTACK CAME, IT WAS FOLLOWED BY COUNTER-ATTACKS... AND COUNTER-COUNTER-ATTACKS...

THE WAR LASTED *7.39 MINUTES*, AS RECKONED BY OUTER EARTH STANDARDS. WHEN IT WAS OVER, THERE WAS NO VICTOR--ONLY *LOSERS!*

THE SURVIVORS OF THE WAR WERE NOT UNTOUCHED. THOSE EXPOSED TO THE AWESOME RADIATION BEGAN TO UNDERGO A MUTATION-- A CHANGE EQUIVALENT TO *REVERSE EVOLUTION*. THE CLOSER TO THE CENTER OF RADIATION, THE GREATER THE CHANGE. MEN BECAME *BEASTMEN*... AND *LESS*.

COUNTLESS GENERATIONS LATER, SKARTARANS HAVE EVOLVED TO VARIOUS STATES OF BARBARISM AND MEDIEVAL CIVILIZATION DWELLING AMONG THE RUINS OF ONCE-GREAT CITIES, UNAWARE THAT THE GREAT COMPUTER WAS STILL WAITING TO SERVE THEM.

SUDDENLY THE IMAGE ON THE SCREEN CHANGES...

OMEGA INDEX LOG SUPPLEMENT: COMPUTER B-100-D HAS BEEN *ACTIVATED* WITHIN THE LAST *SOLAR WEEK!*

TERMINAL LOCATION: THERA. TERMINAL DESIGNATION: SOLID LIGHT HOLOGRAM PROJECTOR APPARATUS. STATUS: TERMINAL DESTROYED!

MORGAN! IT'S... DEIMOS!!

THAT CHARLATAN!

HE HAD EVERYONE BELIEVING HE HAD *MAGIC POWERS*, AND ALL THE WHILE HE WAS USING THE BLOODY *COMPUTER!*

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE POWERS OF EVIL, MORGAN. I HAVE *SEEN* SORCERY, AND IT *WORKS!*

PERHAPS, BUT IT'S OBVIOUS THAT THE POWERS OF *BLACK MAGIC* CAN'T HOLD A CANDLE TO *ATLANTEAN SCIENCE!*

DEIMOS SAW THAT --SO HE RESORTED TO PURE *SHOWMANSHIP!*

*SCROLLS OF BLOOD! HAH! SCROLLS OF BALONEY! DEIMOS PROBABLY STUMBLED ONTO A BUNCH OF *TECHNICAL MANUALS* AND LEARNED ABOUT THE *COMPUTER!**

**WARLORD #4 --MIKE & JACK*

MOMENTARILY PREOCCUPIED WITH HIS SPECULATION, MORGAN DOESN'T HEAR THE SOFT PAD OF FOOTSTEPS BEHIND HIM.

FORTUNATELY, HIS LOVELY COMPANION IS MORE ALERT...

WITH THE POWERS OF THAT COMPUTER AT HIS COMMAND, HE COULD HAVE RULED SKARTARIS!

HMMM! I WONDER WHAT'S BEHIND THIS DOOR!

MORGAN!!

THEY MUST HAVE BEEN ATTRACTED BY THE SMELL OF BLOOD FROM THAT *DINOSAUR*...BUT WHAT DO THEY WANT WITH US? THERE'S ENOUGH FOOD FOR ALL OF THEM OUTSIDE!

QUITE CORRECT, TRAVIS MORGAN! BUT, UNLIKE ITS AFRICAN COUNTER-PART, THE *HYAENODON* PREFERS TO *KILL* ITS *OWN MEAT!*

UP YOU GO! WE'LL HAVE A BETTER CHANCE IF WE GET ABOVE--!

OH-OH! I GUESS THEY DON'T KNOW THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE *MAN'S BEST FRIEND!*

CANINES? YES, BUT IT WILL TAKE 25 MILLION YEARS FOR THESE BEASTS OF THE *EOCENE ERA* TO BECOME *WOLVES!* EACH ONE OF THESE SHAGGY MONSTERS REPRESENTS 250 POUNDS OF BONE-CRUSHING FURY-- A *KILLING MACHINE* ENGINEERED FOR *DESTRUCTION!*

BUT THIS TIME THEIR CHOSEN PREY IS A MAN WHOSE LIGHTNING SPEED AND STEEL-TOUGH BRAWN ARE *EQUALLY* SUITED TO THE TASK OF KILLING--A MAN WHO BATTLES WITH A FURY THAT RIVALS THEIR OWN!

AGAIN AND AGAIN THE SHATTERING ROAR OF THE .44 MAGNUM FILLS THE CHAMBER.

AGAIN AND AGAIN, MORGAN'S GLEAMING BLADE FLASHES DOWN AND COMES BACK DRIPPING GORE.

MORGAN!! BEHIND YOU!!

TARA! THANKS, I--!

UH-OH! GUN'S EMPTY!

KLIK

WITH A FEARSOME SNARL, THE LAST *DEVIL DOG* LEAPS...

...TO HIS *DEATH!*

THE MOMENTUM OF THE HURTLING CORPSE SENDS MORGAN CRASHING THROUGH THE GREAT WOODEN DOOR--WHICH TURNS SUDDENLY...

...TO *DUST!*

AS MORGAN HURLS THE LIMP CARCASS FROM HIM...

THE *DOOR!* IT JUST CRUMBLED TO *DUST!* SHOWS YOU WHAT SEVERAL THOUSAND GENERATIONS OF *TERMITES* CAN DO!

MORGAN! LOOK!

WHAT *IS* THAT THING?

UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, *THAT,* MY DEAR, IS THE ATLANTEAN VERSION OF THE "A" *TRAIN!*

IN MY WORLD WE HAVE MASS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS CALLED *SUBWAYS*. THEY RUN ON *UNDER-GROUND TRACKS,* AND CARRY PEOPLE AROUND CITIES.

IT STANDS TO REASON THAT THE ATLANTEANS DEVELOPED SOME SORT OF *SUBTERRANEAN SHUTTLECRAFT* TO LINK THEIR FAR-FLUNG *COLONIES!*

THIS THING SEEMS TO BE IN PRETTY GOOD SHAPE!

LET'S HAVE A LOOK *INSIDE!*

OH, NO YOU DON'T! YOU'RE NOT GETTING *ME* INSIDE THAT THING!

I DON'T LIKE THIS, MORGAN. LET'S WAIT UNTIL THE MEN GET BACK!

YOU WORRY TOO MUCH! YOU WAIT HERE, AND I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

I PROMISE!

I JUST WANT TO GET A LOOK AT THE CONTROLS. IF I COULD FIGURE OUT HOW TO RUN THIS THING, WE COULD RIDE TO SHAMBALLAH IN STYLE!

SUDDENLY...

THE DOOR! SOMEHOW I MUST HAVE TRIPPED THE *LATCH!*

MORGAN! OPEN THE DOOR!

I CAN'T!! IT'S LATCHED!

SUDDENLY THE CAVERN IS FILLED WITH AN OMINOUS RUMBLING..

WHA...WHAT'S THAT SOUND? MORGAN! WHAT'S *HAPPENING?*

THE ENGINES! THEY'RE STARTING UP!

RRRRMMMM

SUDDENLY THE SHUTTLECRAFT LURCHES FORWARD...

TARA! STAND BACK! I'M GOING TO BLAST THE...

UNNGH!

MORGAN!!

ON AND ON THROUGH THE DARKNESS HURTLES THE RUN-AWAY SHUTTLECRAFT, CARRYING ITS LONE, UNCONSCIOUS PASSENGER TOWARD THE UNKNOWN.

SOME TIME LATER, AN AUTO-MATIC GUIDANCE SYSTEM BRINGS IT TO A GENTLE HALT.

CONSCIOUSNESS RETURNS TO MORGAN SLOWLY--PAINFULLY...

UNNGH! NEVER SHOULD HAVE TAKEN OFF MY HELMET!

HEY! THE CAR HAS STOPPED!

AT LEAST THE DOOR IS OPEN!

MAYBE I CAN FIND OUT WHERE I AM...

...AND THEN I CAN FIGURE OUT HOW TO GET BACK TO *TARA*!

NO!

OH, GOD! NO!!

IT...

...CAN'T...

...BE!

A STRANGE REACTION FROM A MAN WHOSE THEORY HAS JUST BEEN PROVEN... *ALMOST!* FOR THE *SUB-SHUTTLE* IS INDEED A LINK BETWEEN *ATLANTEAN COLONIES*... BUT NOT ALL THOSE COLONIES LIE *BENEATH* THE EARTH'S CRUST...

WITNESS, IF YOU WILL, THE SOMEWHAT *PITIFUL* FIGURE OF A MAN: *LIEUTENANT COLONEL TRAVIS MORGAN, U.S. AIR FORCE...*

...MORGAN THE *RAIDER*...

...MORGAN THE *LIBERATOR*...

...MORGAN THE *WARLORD!*

The End

A savage struggle to return to the lost world of...
NO. 6
MAY
32482
THE WARLORD
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MIKE GRELL
CAN THE WARLORD REJOIN THE WOMAN HE LOVES--OR WILL HIS OWN PEOPLE EXECUTE HIM AS A TRAITOROUS SPY?

HIGH IN THE ANDES OF PERU LIES AN INCREDIBLE MONUMENT TO ONE OF THE GREATEST CIVILIZATIONS THE WORLD HAS KNOWN: *MACHU PICCHU*, FORTRESS STRONGHOLD OF THE LOST *INCA EMPIRE!*

HERE AMONG THE CONDORS, 20TH CENTURY MAN HAS ONCE AGAIN CHALLENGED THE MYSTERIES OF THE LONG-DEAD CITY...

THIS IS THE SETTING FOR AN INCREDIBLE CONFRONTATION THAT WILL BRING TOMORROW CRASHING INTO YESTERDAY!

J-4697

THE WARLORD

written and illustrated by
MIKE GRELL

COLORED BY:
LIZ
BERUBE

"HOME IS A FOUR-LETTER WORD!"

FOR AN INSTANT SHE IS A WIDE-EYED FAWN, TREMBLING WITH FEAR!

AND THEN SHE IS IN ... *MOTION!*

TAKE IT EASY, LADY! I NEVER ARGUE WITH A WOMAN HOLDING A GUN!

I APOLOGIZE FOR BLEEDING ON YOUR FLOOR, BUT IF YOU PULL THAT TRIGGER, THINGS ARE ONLY GOING TO GET *WORSE!*

WHO *ARE* YOU?

A *TRAVELER*, OF SORTS!

A VERY... *WEARY...*

...TRAVELER--!

SLOWLY, THE SWIRLING, BLACK WATERS OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS ARE LIFTED...

GOOD MORNING, *COLONEL MORGAN!*

JUST TAKE IT EASY. YOU'VE SUFFERED QUITE A NASTY CRACK ON THE HEAD, AND YOU MAY HAVE A CONCUSSION.

WHA--? WHERE AM I?

HOW DID YOU KNOW MY NAME?

WE FOUND YOUR *DOG TAGS,* IDENTIFYING YOU AS ONE LIEUTENANT COLONEL *TRAVIS MORGAN,* U.S. AIR FORCE.

WHERE YOU *ARE* WAS ONCE THE *INCA* CITY OF *MACHU PICCHU!*

PERMIT ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF. I AM PROFESSOR *GEORGE LAKELY* OF HARVARD, AND THESE ARE MY COLLEAGUES...

...PROFESSOR *RICHARD BELDING,* OXFORD UNIVERSITY...

...PROFESSOR *TOR OLAFSON,* UNIVERSITY OF STOCKHOLM...

...AND PROFESSOR *MARIAH ROMANOYA, MOSCOW* UNIVERSITY. I BELIEVE YOU'VE ALREADY MET.

NOT QUITE! WE'RE *ARCHEOLOGISTS* OPERATING ON A U.N. GRANT TO INVESTIGATE THE INCA CIVILIZATION.

AND NOW I TRUST YOU HAVE SOME EXPLANATION FOR YOUR CURIOUS GARB AND YOUR SOMEWHAT DRAMATIC ENTRANCE.

DYNAMITE DANGER

WHAT IS THIS? SOME KIND OF *PROFESSOR'S CONVENTION?*

OH, I *DO!* BUT I DON'T THINK YOU'RE GOING TO *BELIEVE* IT!

MORGAN'S DISTINGUISHED AUDIENCE LISTENS WITH WONDER AS HIS INCREDIBLE STORY UNFOLDS.* HOURS LATER...

...A STORY OF TERROR AND ADVENTURE IN A WORLD AT THE EARTH'S CORE! *SKARTARIS,* WHERE AMONG THE LAST RELICS OF THE LOST ATLANTEAN CIVILIZATION, MORGAN AND HIS BELOVED *TARA* BATTLED FOR THEIR LIVES IN AN UNDER-GROUND COMPUTER CENTER, AND A STILL-OPERATIVE SHUTTLECRAFT CAUSED THEIR SEPARATION...

*INCREDIBLE INDEED! SEE LAST ISSUE!
--Mike & Jack

...AND WHEN THE *SHUTTLECRAFT* STARTED UP, I GOT A CRACK ON THE SKULL! WHEN I CAME TO, IT WAS STOPPED AT ANOTHER STATION.

I FUMBLED MY WAY OUT OF THE CAVE AND FOUND MYSELF ON A MOUNTAIN LEDGE OVERLOOKING THESE RUINS. I SAW THE LIGHTS OF YOUR CAMP AND MADE MY WAY DOWN. THE REST YOU KNOW.

WHAT'S THE *DATE?*

APRIL 16TH!

APRIL? MY PLANE WAS SHOT DOWN IN *JUNE, 1969.*

FUNNY! IT DOESN'T *SEEM* LIKE I WAS DOWN IN SKARTARIS FOR ALMOST A *YEAR--!*

I'M AFRAID YO'J *MISUNDERSTOCD,* COLONEL MORGAN! THIS IS *APRIL* 16TH...

...1977!

MY GOD! 8 YEARS!

I KNEW TIME WAS MIXED UP IN SKARTARIS, BUT *8 YEARS?!??*

PROFESSOR, ASSUMING THIS IS *NOT* SOME *CAPITALIST TRICK,* IT MAY EXPLAIN OUR *FINDINGS!*

YOU MEAN I'M *51 YEARS OLD?*

I DON'T *FEEL* 51 YEARS OLD!

BY GEORGE, I THINK SHE'S GOT SOMETHING THERE!

THIS COULD BE THE ANSWER TO EVERYTHING!

DO I *LOOK* 51 YEARS OLD?

COME WITH US, COLONEL MORGAN. THERE'S SOMETHING WE'D LIKE YOU TO SEE!

MOMENTS LATER, PROFESSOR LAKELY LEADS THE WAY THROUGH THE CRUMBLING RUINS...

AS YOU MAY KNOW, COLONEL MORGAN, THE *INCA* CIVILIZATION FLOURISHED BETWEEN THE YEARS 1200 B.C. AND 1500 A.D. AND VANISHED WITH THE COMING OF THE *CONQUISTADORS!*

HOWEVER, WE HAVE UNCOVERED A STRUCTURE *BENEATH* THE RUINS WHICH *PREDATES* THE INCAS BY NEARLY *TEN THOUSAND YEARS!*

LET ME GIVE YOU A HAND.

I CAN DO QUITE WELL *WITHOUT* YOUR HELP!

LOOK, I *APOLOGIZE* FOR LAST NIGHT--!

LAST NIGHT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT!

THEN WHY THE COLD SHOULDER?

HOW WOULD YOU HAVE ME TREAT A MAN WHO MAKES *WAR* AGAINST MY COUNTRY?

WAR?!! ALL I EVER DID WAS FLY OVER *VLADIVOSTOK* AND TAKE A FEW *PICTURES!*

A FEW OF YOUR *MISSILE* BOYS TOOK EXCEPTION AND SHOT ME DOWN. YOU SEE, I WAS PHOTOGRAPHING A *BACTERIOLOGICAL WEAPONS RESEARCH CENTER* A *YEAR AFTER* YOUR COUNTRY SIGNED A TREATY *BANNING* GERM WARFARE.

EXACTLY WHAT I'D EXPECT FROM A *CAPITALIST WARMONGER!*

LISTEN, LADY! I'VE SPILLED MORE BLOOD AND SEEN MORE COMBAT THAN ALL THE GENERALS IN THE KREMLIN AND THE PENTAGON PUT TOGETHER, BUT THERE *IS* A SUBTLE DIFFERENCE...

...IN *THEIR* KIND OF WAR, *NOBODY EVER WINS!*

WE WERE EXCAVATING HERE WHEN WE BROKE THROUGH INTO THE CHAMBER BELOW. HAVE A LOOK!

IF YOUR STORY IS TRUE, THIS TEMPLE COULD BE THE PROOF THAT THE *INCAS* WERE THE DESCENDANTS OF THE *ATLANTEANS*.

IT COULD TAKE MONTHS... *YEARS* TO TRANSLATE THESE HIEROGLYPHICS. I THOUGHT... PERHAPS...

I UNDERSTAND, PROFESSOR, AND I *CAN* READ SOME OF THIS, BUT YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT ONE THING.!

THIS *ISN'T* A TEMPLE... IT'S A *TOMB!*

ACCORDING TO THIS, WE'RE LOOKING AT THE TOMB OF *TIKAL*, THE CAT DEMON. TIKAL WAS A SERVANT OF THE *SUN GOD* UNTIL HE COMMITTED SOME SACRILEGE.

HE WAS "... ENTOMBED IN STONE, THAT HIS EYES MIGHT BE FOREVER BLINDED TO THE GLORY OF *RA*!"

THE REST IS JUST THE USUAL COLLECTION OF CURSES FOR ANYONE WHO TAMPERS WITH THE TOMB.

THIS COULD BE THE GREATEST DISCOVERY SINCE *CLEOPATRA'S TOMB!*

RICHARD! TOR! BRING THE *DYNAMITE* AT ONCE! WE'RE GOING TO OPEN THE TOMB!

I HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING, PROFESSOR!

YOU SOUND AS THOUGH YOU ACTUALLY BELIEVE IN THE CURSE!

IF THERE'S ONE THING I'VE LEARNED IN THE LAST 8 YEARS, IT'S THAT *ANYTHING* IS POSSIBLE!

WITHIN MINUTES A SKILLFULLY PLACED DYNAMITE CHARGE IS DETONATED...

TO BE ECHOED BY THE THUNDERING CRASH OF THE FALLING MONOLITH...

IT'S A STATUE!

WHAT WERE YOU EXPECTING -- A FLESH-AND-BLOOD, FIRE-BREATHING *DEMON?*

AT THAT MOMENT...

PEOPLE DON'T *BURY* STAT--!

WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

IT SOUNDS AS THOUGH YOUR *PEOPLE* HAVE ARRIVED!

MY "*PEOPLE*"?!! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

WHY, THE *AIR FORCE,* OF COURSE! WHEN WE FOUND YOUR DOG TAGS LAST NIGHT, WE *RADIOED* THEM THAT YOU WERE SAFE AND SOUND!

YOU FOOLS! YOU *BLOODY FOOLS!!* DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'VE *DONE?*

V-1

AIR AMERICA

HERE THEY COME! AND THAT'S NO AIR FORCE CHOPPER --I RECOGNIZE THE INSIGNIA!

IT'S OWNED BY AN OUTFIT WE USED TO CALL *THE COMPANY!*

541-N

AIR AMERICA

I SHOULD THINK YOU'D BE *HAPPY* TO SEE THEM!

LOOK, PROFESSOR *ROMANOVA*, THESE GUYS AREN'T COMING TO GIVE ME MY *BACK PAY!*

AND I'VE GOT A HUNCH THEY'RE NOT GOING TO BUY A STORY ABOUT SPENDING EIGHT YEARS IN *NEVER-NEVER LAND!*

IN SHORT, THEY THINK I *SOLD OUT* TO THE *RUSSIANS... COMRADE!!*

ALL RIGHT, *FREEZE, YOU TURKEYS!*

WHICH ONE OF YOU IS *MORGAN?*

I AM!

SOMEHOW I COULD HAVE GUESSED!

WHAT'S WITH THE *HALLOWEEN COSTUME,* MORGAN?

SO *THIS* IS THE WAY YOUR COUNTRY WELCOMES YOU HOME, COLONEL!

HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!

DO MY SHELL-LIKE EARS DETECT A *RUSSIAN ACCENT?*

SEE HERE! YOU HAVE NO *RIGHT--!*

THE MOTION IS REFLEXIVE, WITH NO MORE CONCERN THAN IF HE WERE SWATTING A FLY!

BUT IT TRIGGERS A REACTION THAT IS BOTH INSTINCTIVE AND *SAVAGE...*

AAHRRR!

I WANT HIM *ALIVE!*

IN THE CHAOS OF THE MOMENT, NO ONE NOTICES THAT THE RAYS OF THE SETTING SUN ARE CLIMBING EVER HIGHER ON THE EBON STATUE OF THE *CAT DEMON*...

WHY DON'T YOU COME ALONG PEACEFULLY, CHUM?

TAKE ME ...IF YOU *CAN!*

A FROZEN MOMENT IN TIME! SUNLIGHT WASHES OVER EMERALD EYES--EYES THAT SUDDENLY BLAZE WITH *LIFE!*

MY GOD! WHAT *IS* THAT THING? BULLETS JUST *BOUNCE* OFF--!

WATCH OUT, YOU FOOL!

AAAIEEEE

SLOWLY, *DELIBERATELY,* THE LIVING DEMON TURNS TO NEW *VICTIMS*...

LEAVE ME! SAVE *YOURSELF!*

MARIAH!

WITH THE SPEED OF A JAGUAR, MORGAN *MOVES*...

...AND SPRINGS!

JUST ONE CHANCE...OR WE'RE *ALL DEAD!*

IF I CAN JUST HANG ON--!

ITS EYES BLINDED TO THE LIFE-GIVING RAYS OF THE SUN, THE *STONE DEMON* SUDDENLY STIFFENS ... FALTERS...

...AND *FALLS!*

SORRY YOUR BIG DISCOVERY WAS DESTROYED, PROFESSOR!

A SACRIFICE I MAKE ***WILLINGLY,*** I ASSURE YOU! BUT I'M AFRAID WE'VE CREATED A GREAT DEAL OF TROUBLE FOR YOU.

IT DOESN'T MATTER. I DON'T BELONG IN THIS WORLD ANY MORE. I GUESS YOU REALLY ***CAN'T*** GO HOME AGAIN!

AND THAT GOES FOR YOU TOO, ***COMRADE!*** THESE GUYS WERE ONLY THE BEGINNING OF YOUR TROUBLES.

WHAT... CAN I DO?

YOU'VE GOT THE SPIRIT--YOU PROVED THAT WHEN YOU HELPED PROFESSOR LAKELY. IF YOU'VE GOT THE CURIOSITY TO MATCH, I CAN SHOW YOU A WORLD THAT'S AN ARCHEOLOGIST'S DREAM.

IT WON'T BE EASY, BUT I CAN ***PROMISE*** YOU IT WON'T BE ***DULL!***

YOU ALREADY ***KNOW*** MY ANSWER, MORGAN.

AS THE MOON RISES OVER THE LOST CITY OF *MACHU PICCHU*, THE *ATLANTEAN SUB-SHUTTLE* ONCE AGAIN THUNDERS TO LIFE...

THIS TIME IT CARRIES *TWO* PASSENGERS: *MARIAH ROMANOVA*, BOUND FOR ADVENTURE AND THE UNKNOWN...

...AND *TRAVIS MORGAN*, BOUND AT LAST FOR *HOME!*

SECONDS LATER, A SHATTERING EXPLOSION SEALS THE ENTRANCE TO THE ANCIENT STATION FOREVER...

MEANWHILE, A CERTAIN *"COMPANY MAN"* IS REGAINING CONSCIOUSNESS...

MORGAN! WHERE IS HE?

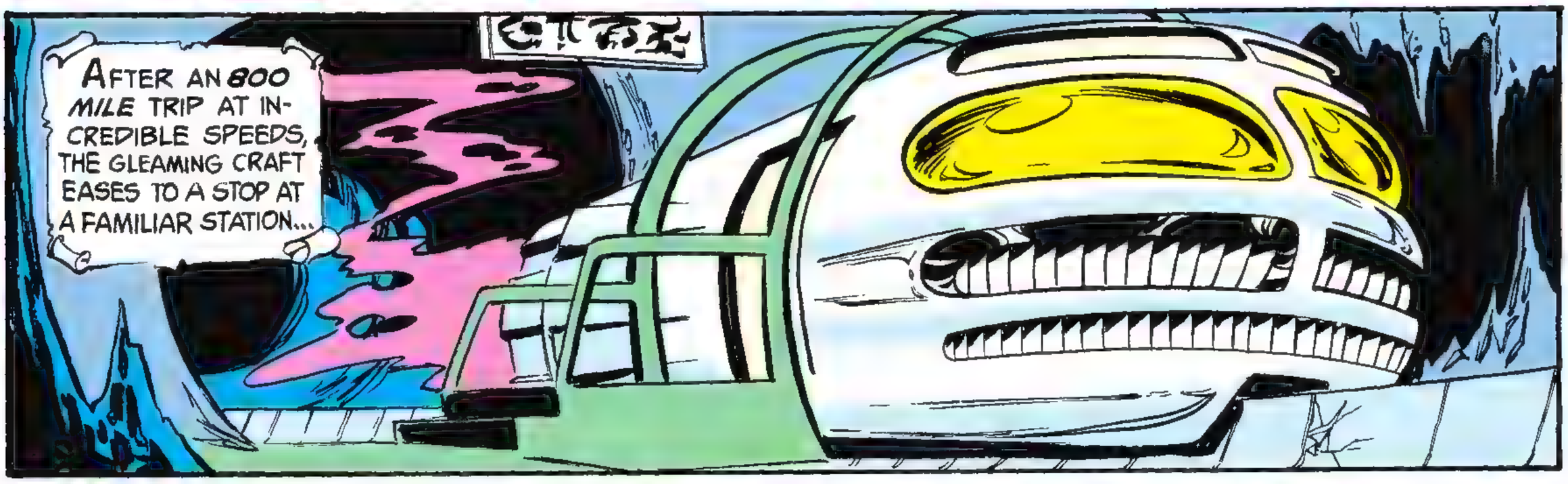
GONE.

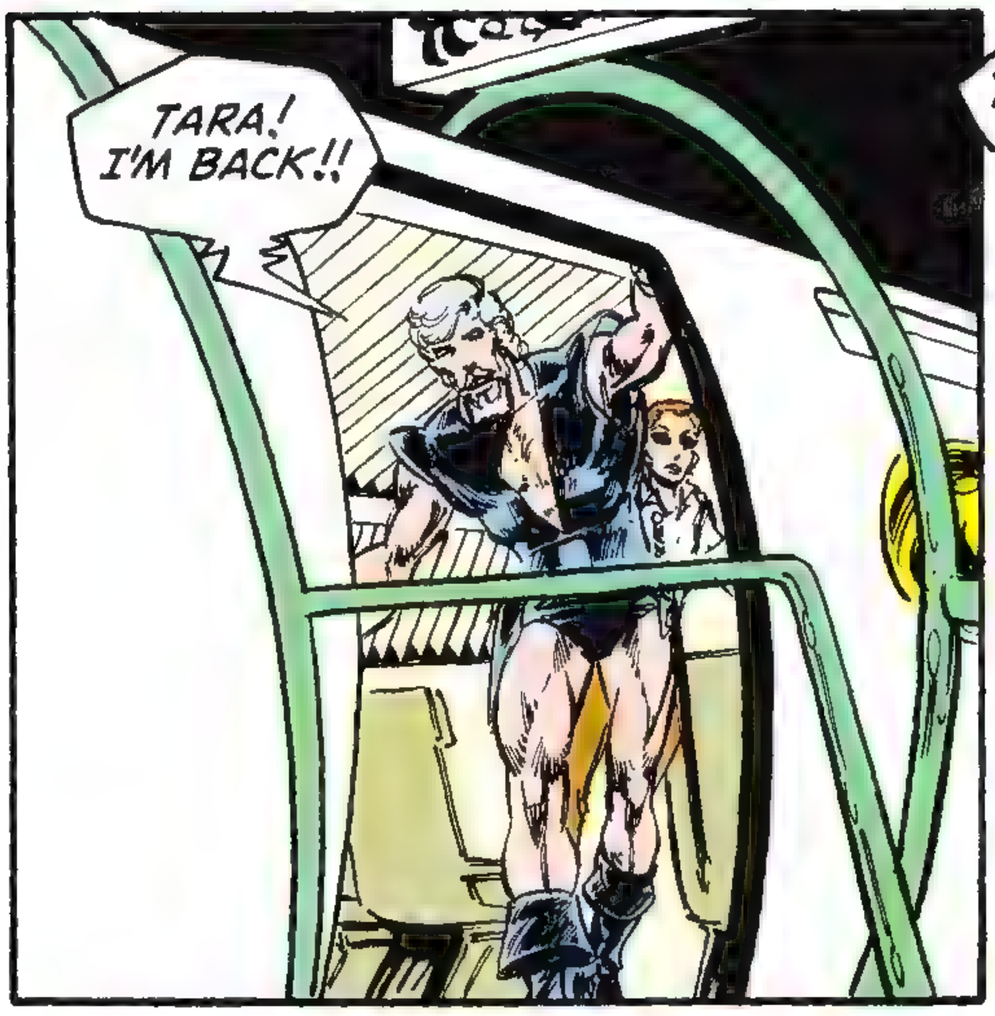
GONE?!! GONE WHERE?

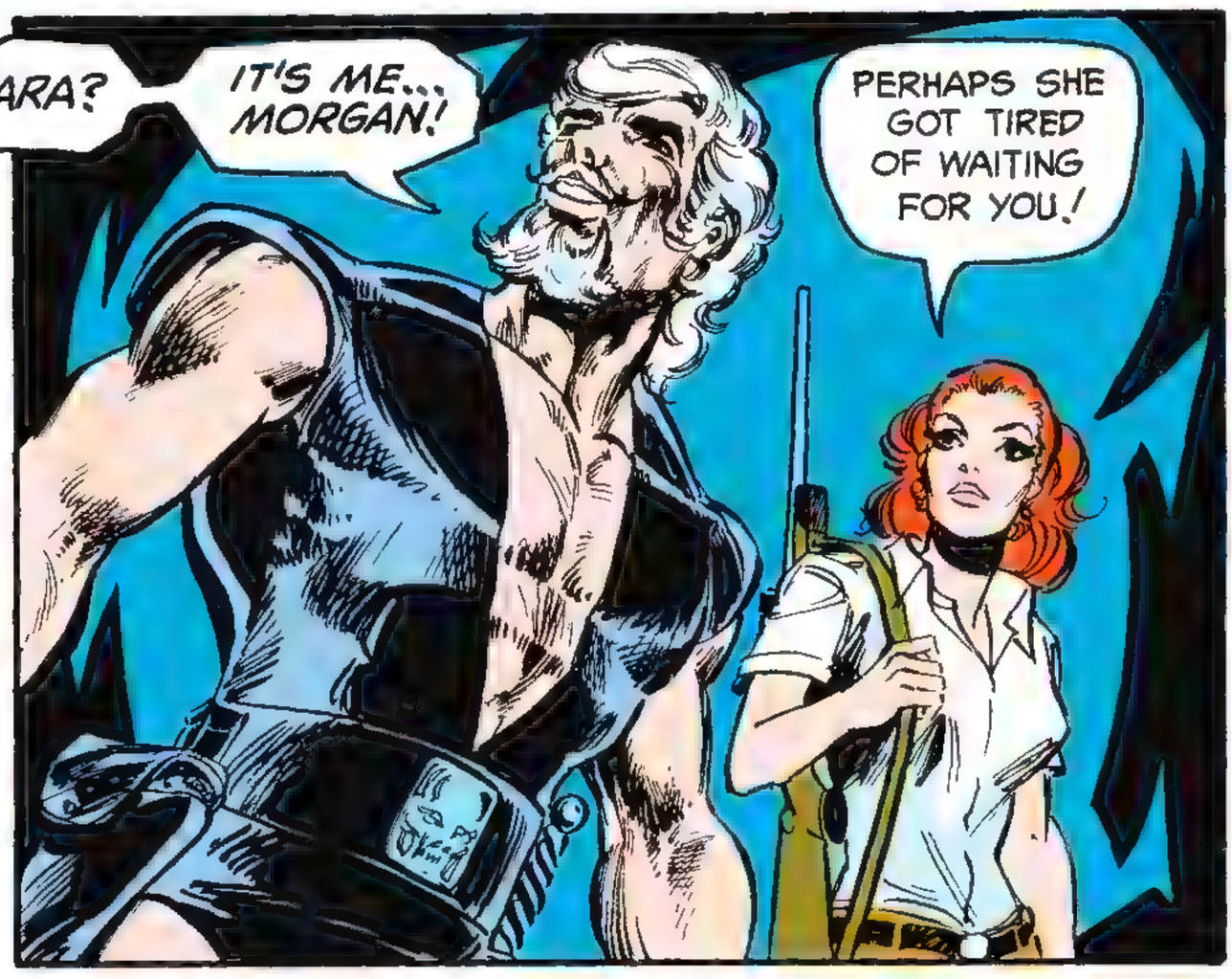
THE SECOND STAR TO THE RIGHT...

...AND STRAIGHT ON TILL MORNING.'

EPILOGUE

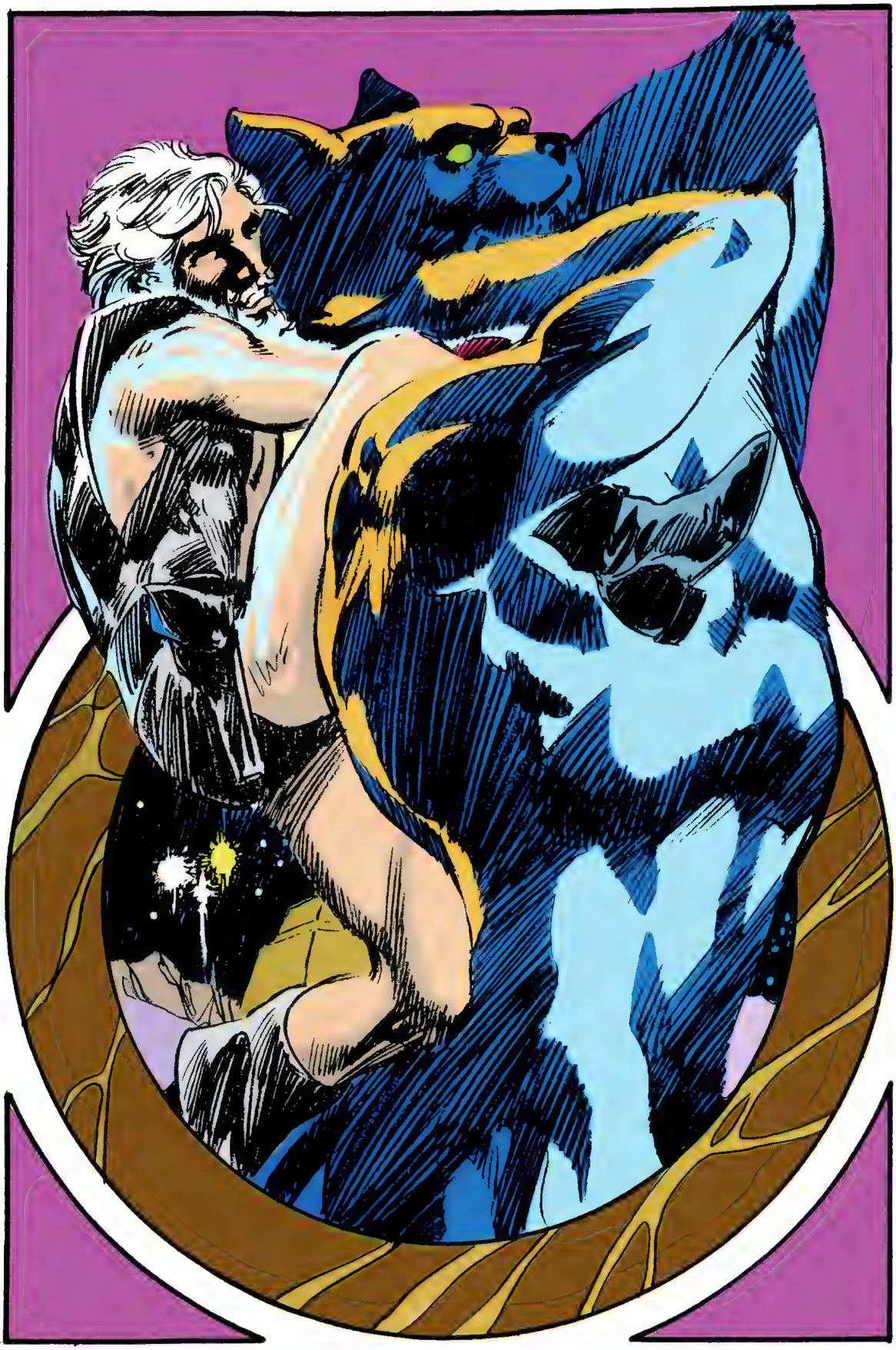

AFTER AN 800 MILE TRIP AT INCREDIBLE SPEEDS, THE GLEAMING CRAFT EASES TO A STOP AT A FAMILIAR STATION...


TARA! I'M BACK!!


TARA?
IT'S ME... MORGAN!
PERHAPS SHE GOT TIRED OF WAITING FOR YOU.!

TARA!
THIS IS CRAZY!
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT PLACE?
OF COURSE I'M SURE.! I LEFT MY HELMET HERE SOMEPLACE.!
WHY DIDN'T SHE WAIT? I'VE ONLY BEEN GONE ONE DAY--!

--HAVEN'T I?



DC
back in The lost world of...
NO. 7
JULY
32482
THE WARLORD
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MIKE GRELL
WHY DOES HIS FRIEND GREET HIM WITH DEATH?

THE CLAMOR OF THE *THIEVES' MARKET* IS A SWIRLING MASS OF BRIGHTLY CLAD HUMANITY, A MELTING POT WHERE NOBLEMAN RUBS SHOULDERS WITH PIRATE, AND EVERYTHING AND NEARLY EVERYONE HAS A PRICE...

I THOUGHT YOU KNEW WHERE YOU WERE *GOING*! THIS DOESN'T LOOK MUCH LIKE THE *GOLDEN CITY* YOU TOLD ME ABOUT!

IT'S *NOT*! IT'S A PLACE CALLED *KIRO*!

TARA WAS TO HAVE BEEN MY *GUIDE* TO *SHAMBALLAH*! ALL I KNOW OF THE PLACE IS THAT IT LIES "BEYOND THE GREAT *FIRE MOUNTAIN*, IN THE *FOREST* OF *EBONDAR*."

ACTUALLY, WE WERE LUCKY TO STUMBLE ON THIS PLACE. I'VE GOT A FRIEND AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE ...IF HE HASN'T GOTTEN HIMSELF *HANGED* ALREADY!

BUT FIRST I'VE GOT SOME *BUSINESS* TO ATTEND TO.

I'M GOING TO HAVE A LOOK AROUND!

OKAY, BUT STAY OUT OF TROUBLE. YOUR COMMAND OF THE LANGUAGE ISN'T ALL THAT GREAT YET.

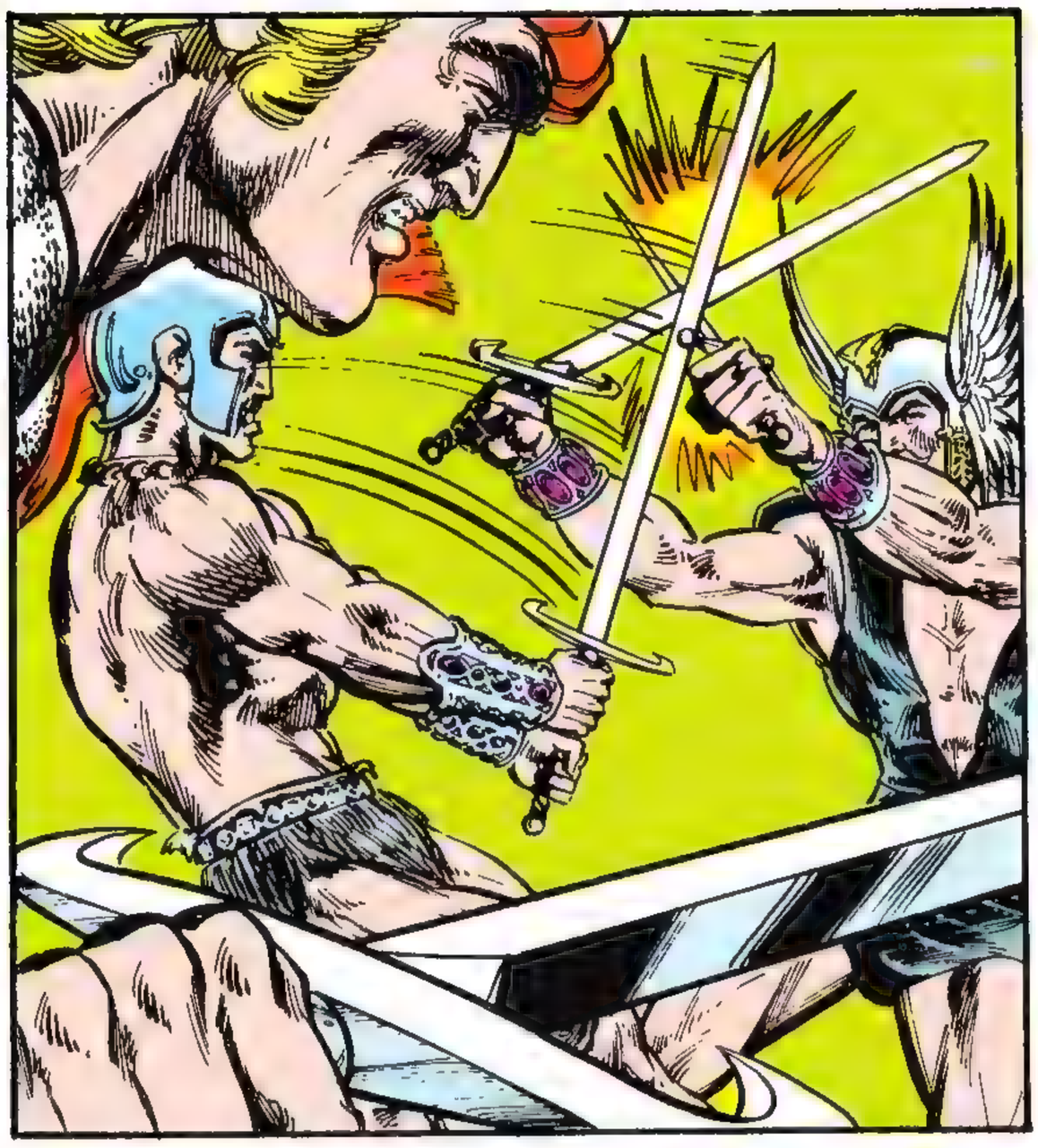
THE GIRL FROM THE *OUTER WORLD* WANDERS HAPPILY THROUGH THE MARKETPLACE, SOAKING IN THE ATMOSPHERE AND FORGETTING THAT A CITY IS JUST A MAN-MADE JUNGLE...

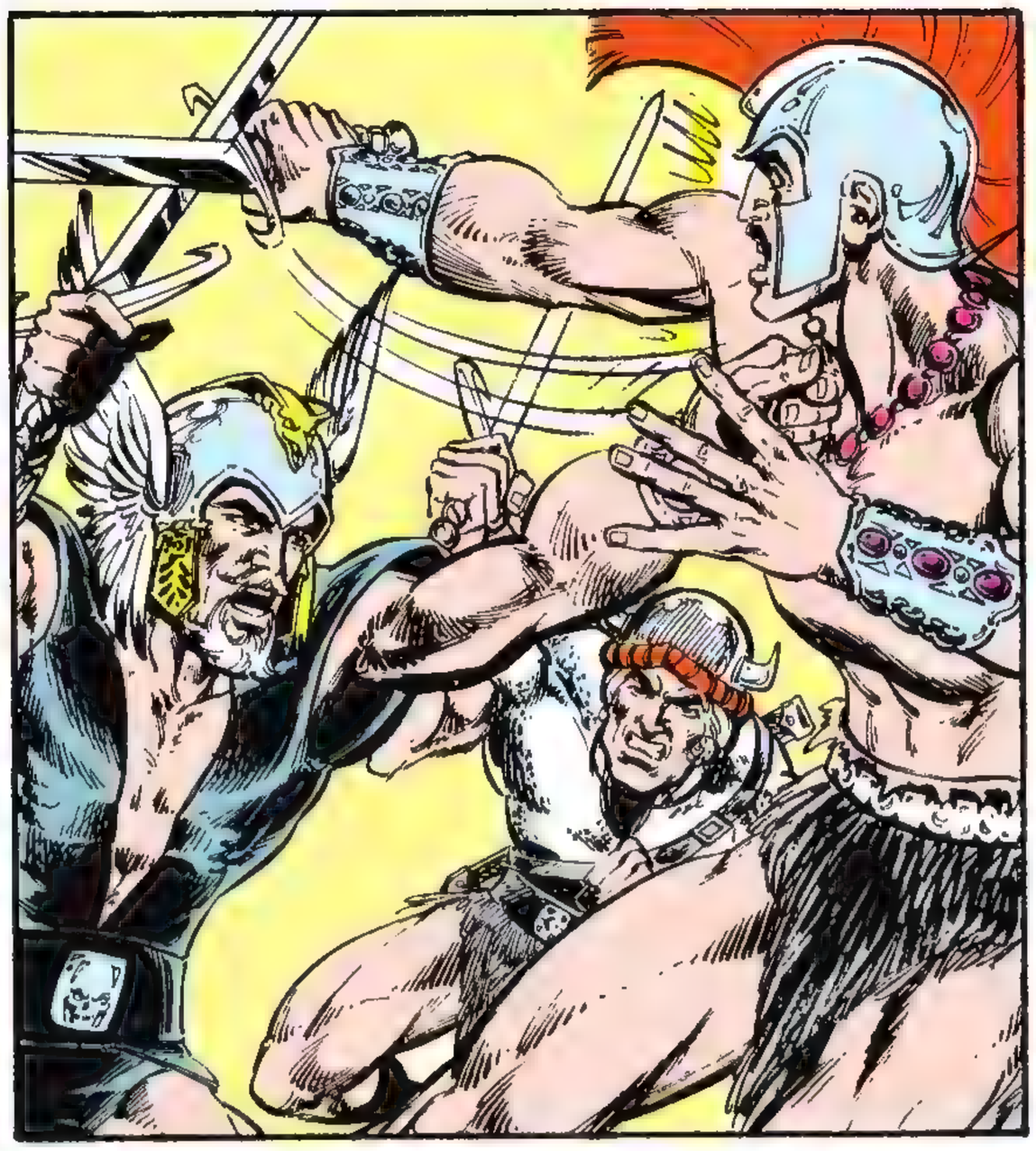
...AND NOT ALL WOLVES ARE FOUR-LEGGED!

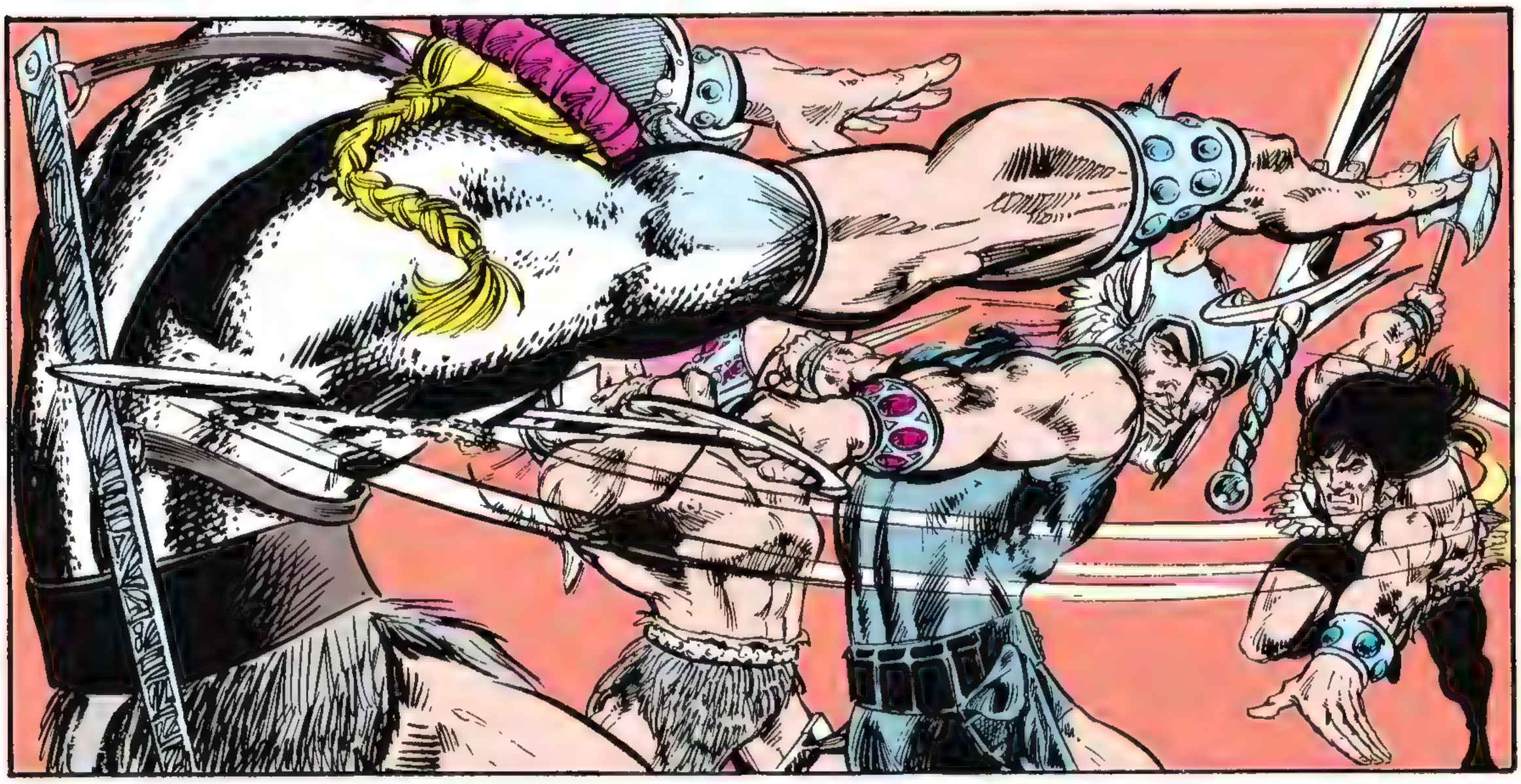
The WARLORD

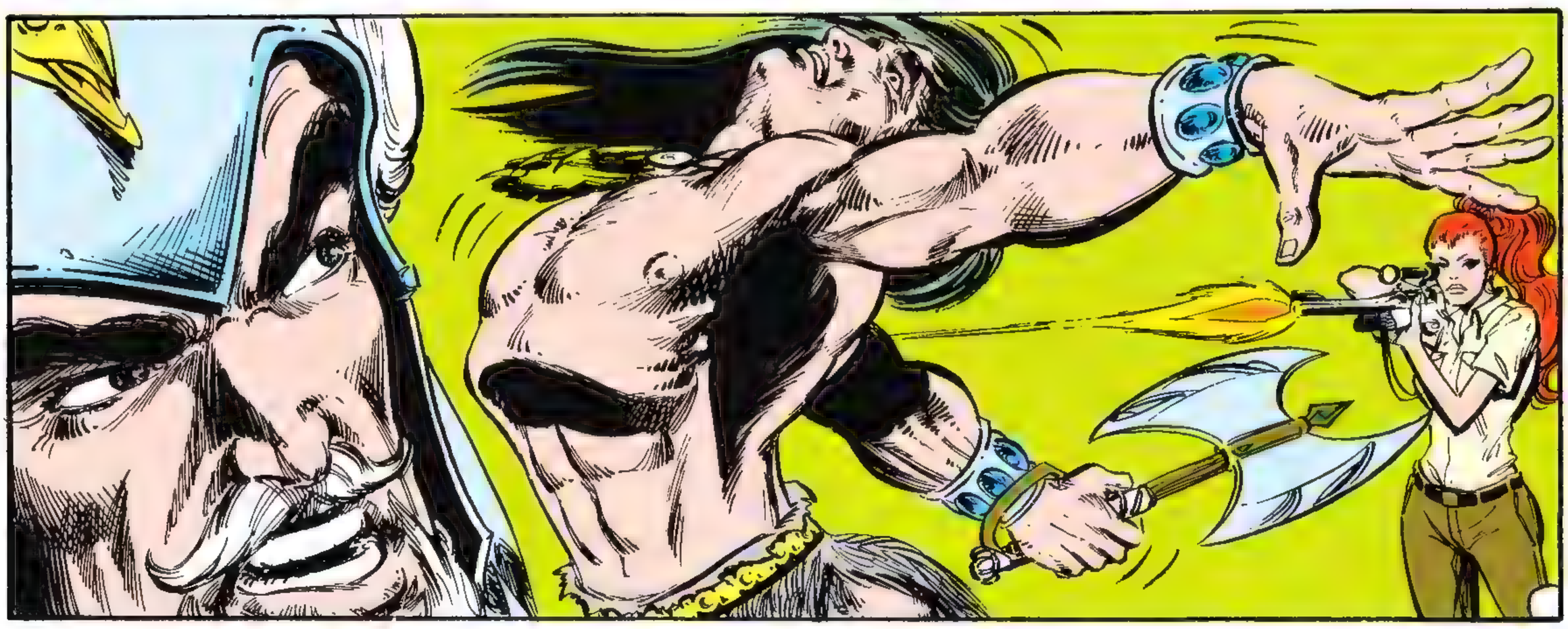
written and illustrated by
MIKE GRELL

THE IRON DEVIL









FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, YOU SAVED MY LIFE.

I...I'LL BE ALL RIGHT!

YES, I THINK YOU *WILL!* RIGHT NOW WE'D BETTER *LEAVE* BEFORE THAT SHOT BRINGS THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

I'VE FOUND THE MAN I WAS LOOKING FOR-- HE K'NOWS THE SECRET OF MAKING *DAMASCUS STEEL!*

LATER, IN THE SHOP OF *DAK BEL SHAN* THE *SWORDMAKER*...

YES... I CAN MAKE SWORDS TO THESE SPECIFICATIONS, BUT IT WILL BE COSTLY!

COST IS NO OBJECT! HERE... *MELT* THIS DOWN FOR THE *STEEL!*

NOT MY RIFLE!?!!

NOW LOOK, THAT'S A .243 -- A LIGHTWEIGHT *SPORTER* -- AND IT ALMOST GOT YOU KILLED BECAUSE OF ITS LACK OF *KILLING POWER!* BESIDES THAT, YOUR AMMO IS ALMOST GONE AND THERE AREN'T ANY *SPORTING GOODS STORES* AROUND HERE. A *SWORD* IS A MUCH MORE *PRACTICAL* WEAPON FOR YOU!

AND SPEAKING OF *PRACTICAL*, WE'D BETTER GET YOU SOME DIFFERENT *CLOTHES!*

WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY CLOTHES?!

AREN'T YOU *CURIOUS* ABOUT *WHY* THOSE MEN ATTACKED YOU? I MEAN, THERE'S NOT EXACTLY A *SHORTAGE* OF *BEAUTIFUL WOMEN* AROUND HERE!

IN *THAT* OUTFIT, YOU'RE ABOUT AS *INCONSPICUOUS* AS A *W.A.S.P.* IN *HARLEM!*

SHORTLY, AT THE *PUBLIC BATH*...

...THE *FULL TREATMENT!*

IT SHALL BE AS YOU SAY!

AT LENGTH...

WELL... I GUESS I'M READY...

... BUT, SOMEHOW, I DON'T *FEEL* VERY *INCONSPICUOUS!*

MAYBE NOT, BUT IT'S WHAT THE WELL-DRESSED *BARBARIAN* WOULD WEAR.

COME ON! LET'S GO PICK UP OUR NEW SWORDS!

YOU'RE *JOKING!*

HOW COULD THAT MAN, WORKING WITH PRIMITIVE TOOLS, *POSSIBLY* MAKE WEAPONS IN SO *SHORT A TIME?*

I DON'T THINK HE OWNS A *WATCH!* BESIDES, TIME JUST DOESN'T *WORK* THE SAME IN *SKARTARIS*-- IT'S *RELATIVE.*

WHILE YOU WERE RELAXING IN YOUR BATH, I *ATE TWICE* AND *SLEPT TWICE!*

YOUR MOUTH IS OPEN.

SHORTLY...

...MY *FINEST* EFFORT! NEVER HAVE I WORKED WITH SUCH *MAGNIFICENT STEEL!*

EACH BLADE IS LAMINATED IN MANY LAYERS WITH THE PUREST IRON FOR GREAT *STRENGTH* AND *FLEXIBILITY!*

YOUR REPUTATION IS WELL DESERVED, *DAK BEL SHAN.* THEY'RE *BEAUTIFUL!*

EXCELLENT! PERFECT BALANCE!

I'VE DEVELOPED A *FEEL* FOR THE *BROADSWORD,* BUT I DESIGNED *YOUR* BLADE TO BE LIGHT AND SUPPLE, WITH ADDED *WEIGHT* IN THE TIP FOR *CUTTING POWER!*

THERE'S A SPECIAL BUTTON ON THE HILT-- *PRESS IT!*

A *STILETTO!* NOT VERY SPORTING!

SPORTMANSHIP HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH STAYING ALIVE. I'LL START YOU ON LESSONS AS SOON AS--!

I DON'T THINK THAT WILL BE *NECESSARY!*

I WAS THE *RUSSIAN NATIONAL SABRE CHAMPION* FOR *SIX YEARS STRAIGHT!*

YOUR MOUTH IS OPEN.

COME ON! WE'LL CHECK OUT A FEW OF THE LOCAL PUBS, AND SEE IF WE CAN LOCATE MY *FRIEND!*

A SUDDEN RUSH...A CRUSHING BLOW...

...*OBLIVION!*

SLOWLY THE BLACKNESS BECOMES A DANK GLOOM, AND THE POUNDING IN MORGAN'S EARS TELLS HIM THAT HE IS NOT DEAD... *YET!*

UNNNGH! NOW I KNOW WHAT A *BONGO DRUM* FEELS LIKE!

WHERE ARE WE?

WE'RE IN THE "*GUEST QUARTERS*" OF SOME *BENEVOLENT MONARCH!*

DON'T BE SO HARD ON *ROYALTY!* WITH A NAME LIKE *ROMANOFF*, YOU'RE ONLY *TWO GENERATIONS* AND A *REVOLUTION* AWAY FROM THE THRONE *YOURSELF!*

MY NAME IS *ROMANOVA*, *NOT ROMANOFF!* I--!

LISTEN! SOMEONE IS COMING!

THE *KING* HAS SENT FOR YOU!

YOU'RE GIVING BACK OUR *WEAPONS?*

ONE DOES NOT *QUESTION* THE KING! ONE *OBEYS!*

MORGAN AND MARIAH ARE ESCORTED INTO A MAGNIFICENT CHAMBER IN THE HIGHEST TOWER IN THE PALACE...

THIS LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING STRAIGHT OUT OF *M.G.M.'S BACKLOT!*

BUILT, NO DOUBT, AT THE *EXPENSE* AND *TOIL* OF THE *POOR MASSES!*

DON'T *KID* YOURSELF! THESE PEOPLE HAVEN'T THE *TECHNOLOGY* TO BUILD SOMETHING LIKE THIS!

YOU'RE LOOKING AT A LEFTOVER FROM THE *ATLANTEAN CIVILIZATION!* WHATEVER ELSE THIS *KING* MAY BE, HE SURE KNOWS HOW TO *LIVE!*

WELCOME, *TRAVIS MORGAN!*

MACHISTE!!

I *TOLD* YOU I WAS SOMEWHAT "*NOTORIOUS*" AROUND HERE!

FROM THE FILTH OF A DUNGEON TO THE LUXURIES OF THE PALACE! WINE FLOWS FREELY AS OLD COMPATRIOTS TRADE TALES OF ADVENTURE...

...AND, ALTHOUGH I WAS ON THE SURFACE WORLD FOR LESS THAN *24 HOURS*, I HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH TIME HAS PASSED DOWN HERE!

APPARENTLY *TARA* THOUGHT I WASN'T COMING BACK AND CONTINUED ON TO *SHAMBALLAH!*

THAT'S A MOST *UNIQUE* BATTLE AXE! I DON'T BELIEVE I'VE EVER SEEN SUCH A DESIGN!

YES, IT *IS*... *"UNIQUE!"* I ACQUIRED IT AFTER MORGAN AND I PARTED COMPANY...

"...IN THE MOUNTAINS BEYOND *KIRO*, I WAS SET UPON BY A TRIBE OF *BEASTMEN*..."

"I BACKED INTO A NARROW CREVICE WHERE THEY COULD ONLY ATTACK ONE OR TWO AT A TIME, AND FOUGHT THEM UNTIL MY SWORD SHATTERED FROM THE FORCE OF OF THE BLOWS..."

"...AND THEN I FOUGHT THEM WITH MY *BARE HANDS!*"

"NEARLY HALF A SCORE LAY DEAD AT MY FEET BEFORE THEY BROKE OFF THE ATTACK..."

"...BUT I KNEW THEY WOULD BE BACK WHEN THEY REGAINED THEIR COURAGE!"

"I DECIDED THAT DISCRETION WAS THE BETTER PART OF *STUPIDITY*, AND CHOSE NOT TO WAIT FOR THEIR RETURN..."

"I WAS WORKING MY WAY BACK UP THE NARROW CREVICE WHEN I FOUND THE *CAVE!*"

"INSIDE THE DUSTY CHAMBER, I DISCOVERED THE CRUMBLING BONES OF AN ANCIENT WARRIOR, HIS ARMOR AND WEAPONS ALL BUT CONSUMED BY RUST, SAVE FOR THE *GLEAMING AXE* WHICH LAY CLUTCHED IN THE BONES OF HIS *SEVERED* RIGHT HAND..."

"STRANGE, FOR THOUGH IT WAS *COLD* INSIDE THE CAVE, WHEN I PICKED UP THE *AXE*, I FELT A SUDDEN *WARMTH* SWEEP OVER ME--WARMTH THAT BECAME A *FIRE OF BLOOD-LUST* WHEN THE BEASTMEN RETURNED TO HAVE ANOTHER GO AT ME..."

MAY I *SEE* IT?

NO!

NO, I'VE GROWN RATHER ..."*ATTACHED*" TO IT!

YOU SEE, I... *CAN'T* SEEM TO PUT THE DAMNED THING *DOWN!*

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!!

JUST WHAT I *SAID*: I CAN'T OPEN MY *HAND* TO *LET GO OF IT!*

NOT THAT IT *MATTERS*, REALLY-- IT'S BECOME A *SYMBOL* OF MY *POWER!*

YOU KNOW, I NEVER REALIZED THE TRUE *MEANING* OF POWER BEFORE-- THE *POWER* TO *COMMAND*...

...TO *DESTROY!!*

NOTHING CAN STAND IN MY-- *URRRK!*

STUPID WENCH!!

YOU *BANDASARIANS* ARE *ALL ALIKE* --A BUNCH OF *ILL-BEGOTTEN CRETINS!*

BY THE GODS, I'LL SEE TO IT THAT THERE IS *ONE LESS* OF YOU TO BOTHER WITH!

I'M *DISAPPOINTED* IN YOU, MACHISTE! ONCE, I WAS *PROUD* TO COUNT YOU AS MY *FRIEND*, AND *GLAD* TO HAVE YOU AT MY SIDE IN *BATTLE!*

NO MORE!!

YOU'VE *FORGOTTEN* WHAT IT'S LIKE TO *BREAK YOUR BACK* IN A *SLAVE GALLEY*...TO *CRAWL* IN THE *DIRT* AND BE TREATED LIKE SOMETHING *LESS THAN HUMAN!*

YOU'VE FORGOTTEN THE *DREAM* WE HAD OF A WORLD WHERE *LIBERTY* MEANS *LIBERTY FOR ALL!* WHERE THE *WEAK* NEED NOT *FEAR* THE *STRONG!* WHERE THE CREDO IS *NOT* "*MIGHT MAKE RIGHT*," BUT "*MIGHT FOR RIGHT*"!

YOU'RE *NOT* A *KING*--YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER *POWER-MAD TYRANT!*

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!!

ANYWHERE!-- AS LONG AS THE *AIR* IS *CLEANER!*

DON'T TURN YOUR BACK ON *ME!!*

GUARDS!!

IN AN INSTANT, MORGAN AND MARIAH ARE THE CENTER OF A RING OF GLITTERING STEEL...

TO *CATCH* THE MAN CALLED *THE WARLORD* IS *ONE* THING--TO *HOLD* HIM IS *ANOTHER!* RATHER, TRY TO HOLD THE *WHIRLWIND,* FOR THE SLASHING BLADE OF THE *WARLORD* IS AS THE *LIGHTNING,* AND THE *FURY* OF THE *THUNDER* IS IN HIS MIGHTY BLOWS...

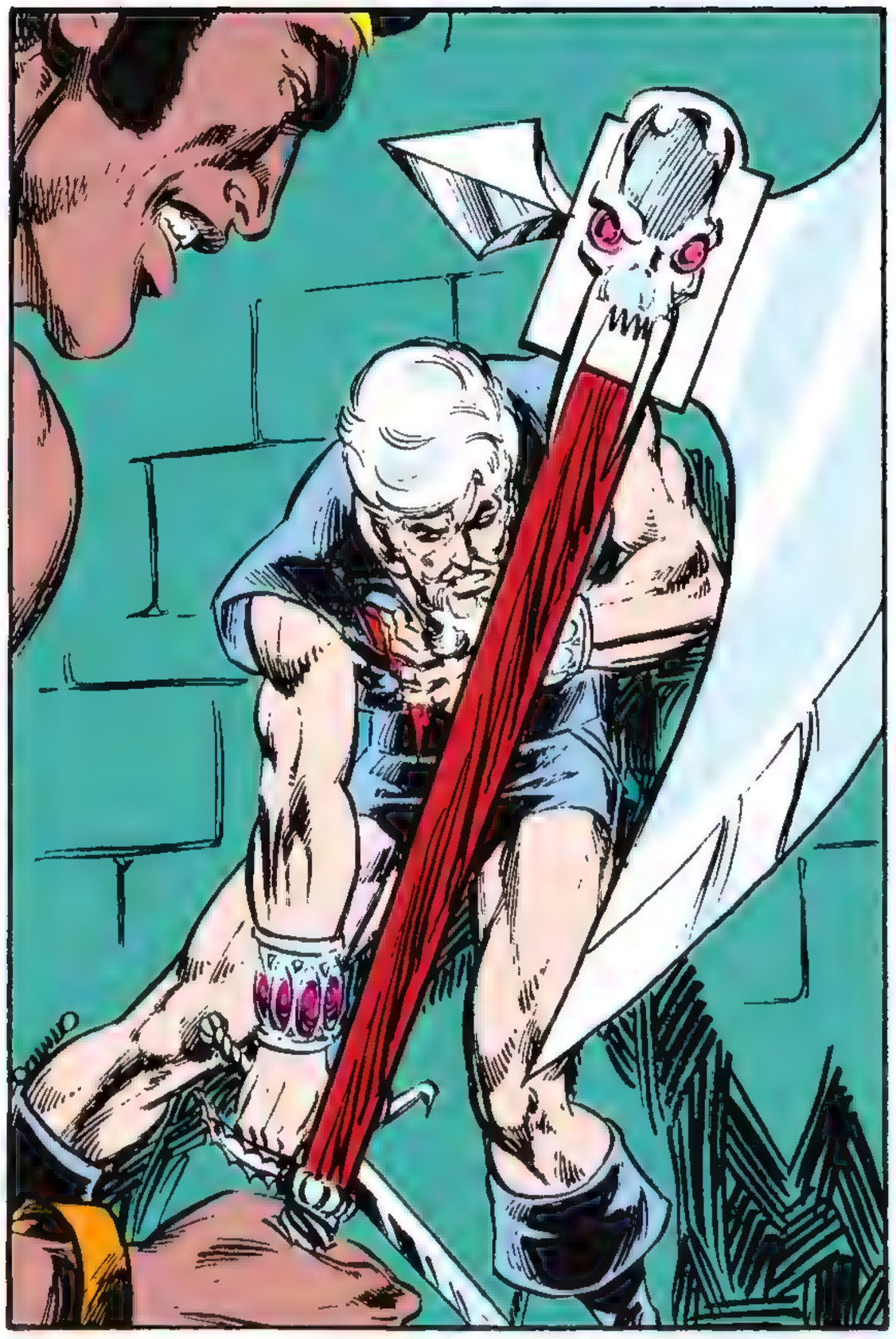
WITHIN SECONDS, THE CLAMOR OF BATTLE DIES AWAY, LEAVING TWO SURVIVORS STANDING IN A SPREADING POOL THAT STAINS THE PALACE FLOOR CRIMSON...

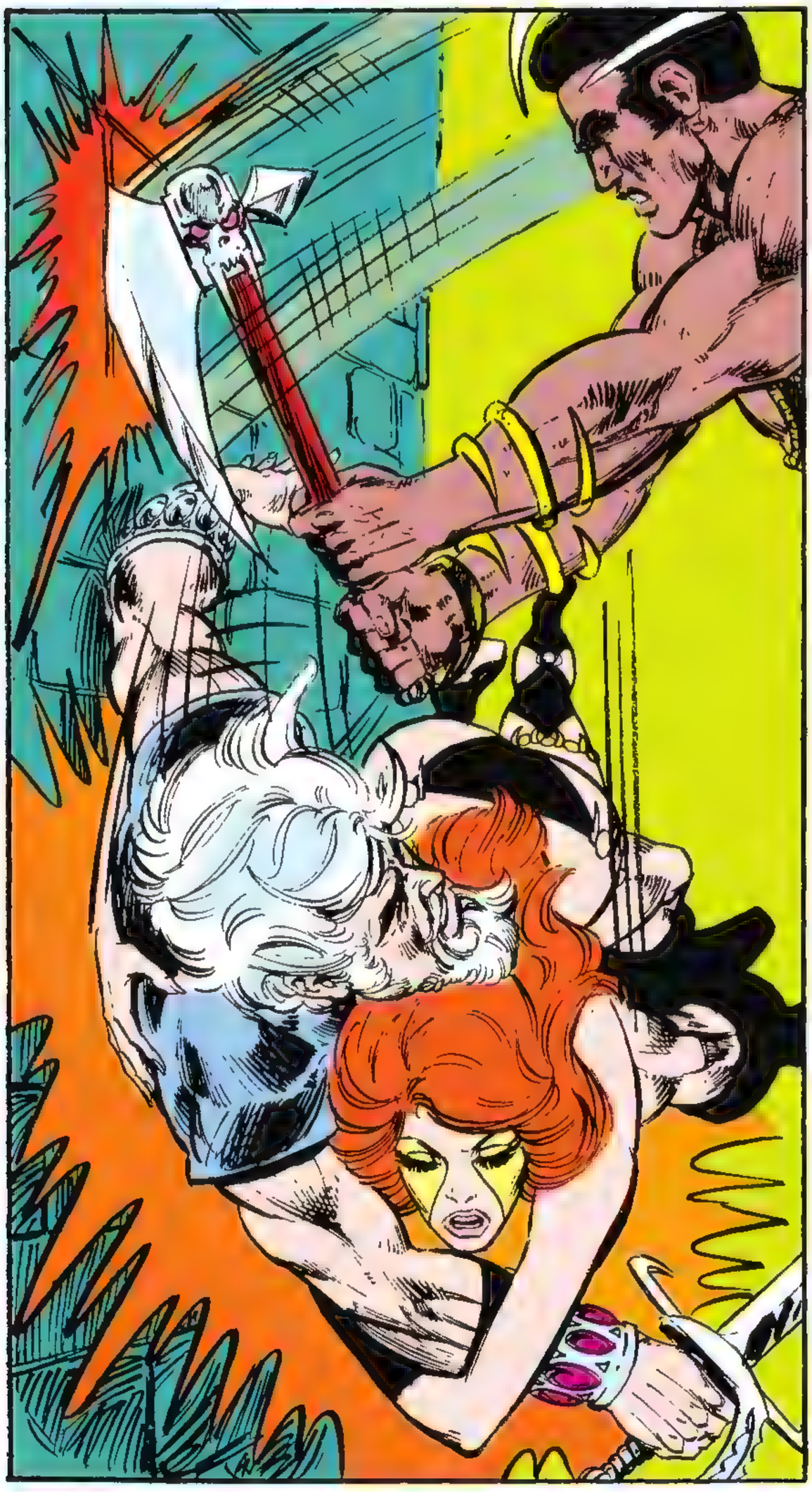
EQUALLY *DEVASTATING* IS THE SLIM BLADE OF *MARIAH ROMANOVA,* DARTING *SERPENT-LIKE* AMONG HER FOES WITH *DEADLY PRECISION...*

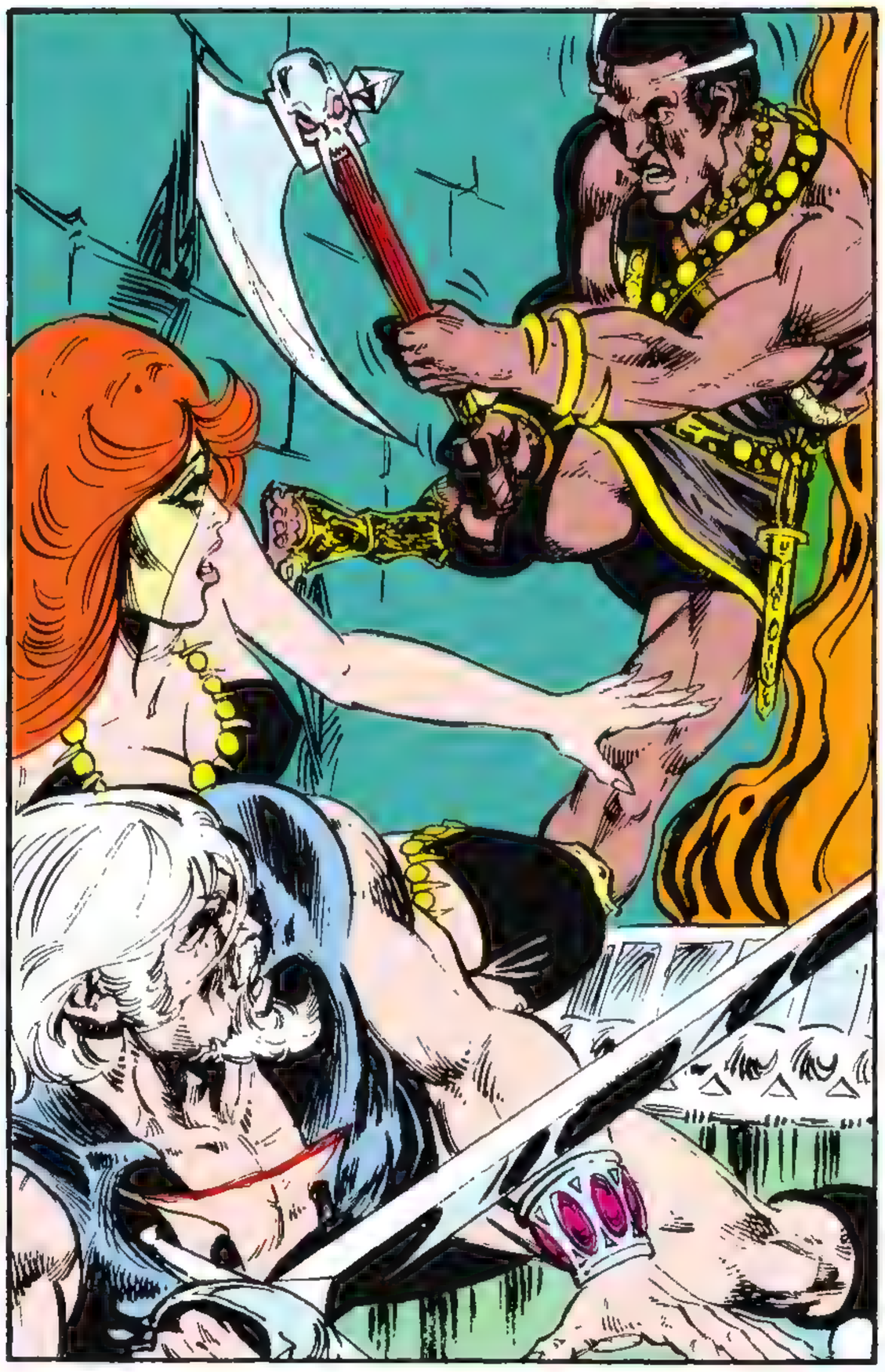
MORGAN!!

NOW YOU WILL DEAL WITH *ME!*

FOR THE *SECOND TIME*, FRIEND FACES FRIEND IN *MORTAL COMBAT!* IN THE RINGING BLOWS OF THE SINISTER *AXE*, MORGAN CAN HEAR THE SOUND OF *DEMONIACAL LAUGHTER!* HE HAS SEEN THE *MADNESS* IN MACHISTE'S EYES, AND KNOWS HE MUST *KILL* OR *BE KILLED!*







IF MORGAN HAD ANY DOUBTS ABOUT THE POWER OF ***EVIL,*** THEY ARE GONE NOW, FOR, AT THE INSTANT THE TERRIBLE BLOW WAS STRUCK, THE LIGHT OF MADNESS DISAPPEARED FROM MACHISTE'S EYES...

I... I'M... ***SORRY,*** OLD FRIEND!

NO, MORGAN! A MAN DOES... WHAT HE ***MUST!***

Epilogue:

A LOYAL MEMBER OF THE ***KIROAN PALACE GUARD*** ASCENDS THE SHEER RIM OF AN ACTIVE VOLCANO, ON A MISSION OF SACRED TRUST...

NO. 8 SEPT.
enter the lost world of
the WARLORD
CERTAIN DEATH AWAITS AT... "THE CITY IN THE SKY!"
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MIKE GRELL

SKARTARIS! A WORLD WITHIN A WORLD WHERE THE SAVAGE PRESENT FLOURISHES AMONG THE RUINS OF THE GLORIOUS PAST...

MACHISTE! I WAS JUST TELLING MARIAH THAT I WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THAT ***KIRO*** IS NOT A ***BLACK KINGDOM!***

WHY? BECAUSE ***MY*** SKIN IS BLACK? WE ARE A NATION OF ***MANY*** RACES-- I JUST HAPPEN TO BE ***KING,*** THAT'S ALL!

I DON'T KNOW HOW IT IS IN ***YOUR*** COUNTRY, BUT ***HERE*** WE JUDGE A MAN BY HIS ***MERITS, NOT*** THE COLOR OF HIS SKIN!

I'M NOT GOING TO HOLD IT AGAINST YOU THAT ***YOURS*** LACKS THE PROPER PIGMENTATION.

GOT CAUGHT WITH YOUR ***IGNORANCE*** SHOWING, HEY, MORGAN?

TOUCHÉ!

HOW'S THE ...ER.. HAND? STILL HAVING THOSE ***PHANTOM PAINS?***

NOT SO ***MUCH*** ANYMORE!

I HAD THE ***ARMORER*** FIT THIS FOR ME! WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I THINK YOU COULD GIVE SOMEONE AN AWFUL ***HEADACHE!***

SUDDENLY...

YOUR MAJESTY! LOOK!!

FROM THE SKY HE CAME, TO A WORLD OF ETERNAL SUNLIGHT AND ETERNAL SAVAGERY--TRAVIS MORGAN, A MAN WITH A LUST FOR ADVENTURE AND PASSION FOR FREEDOM! AS HIS FAME SPREADS, SO GROWS THE LEGEND OF...

The WARLORD

written and illustrated by
MIKE GRELL

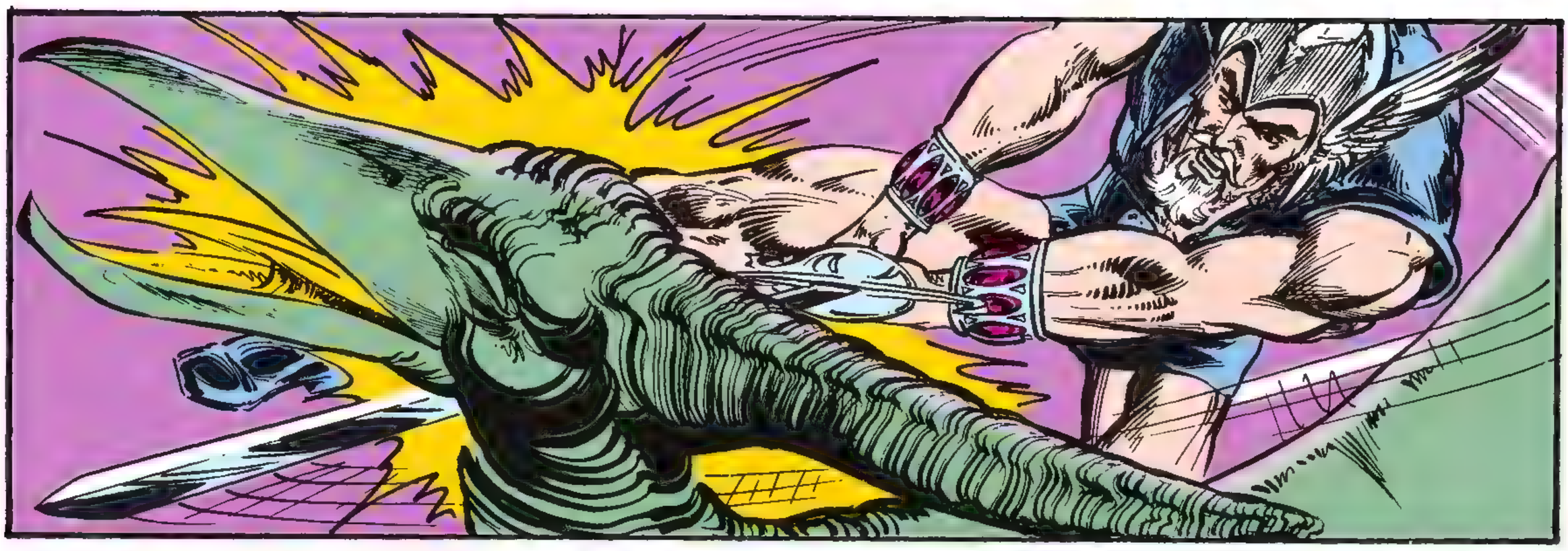
"The City in the Sky"

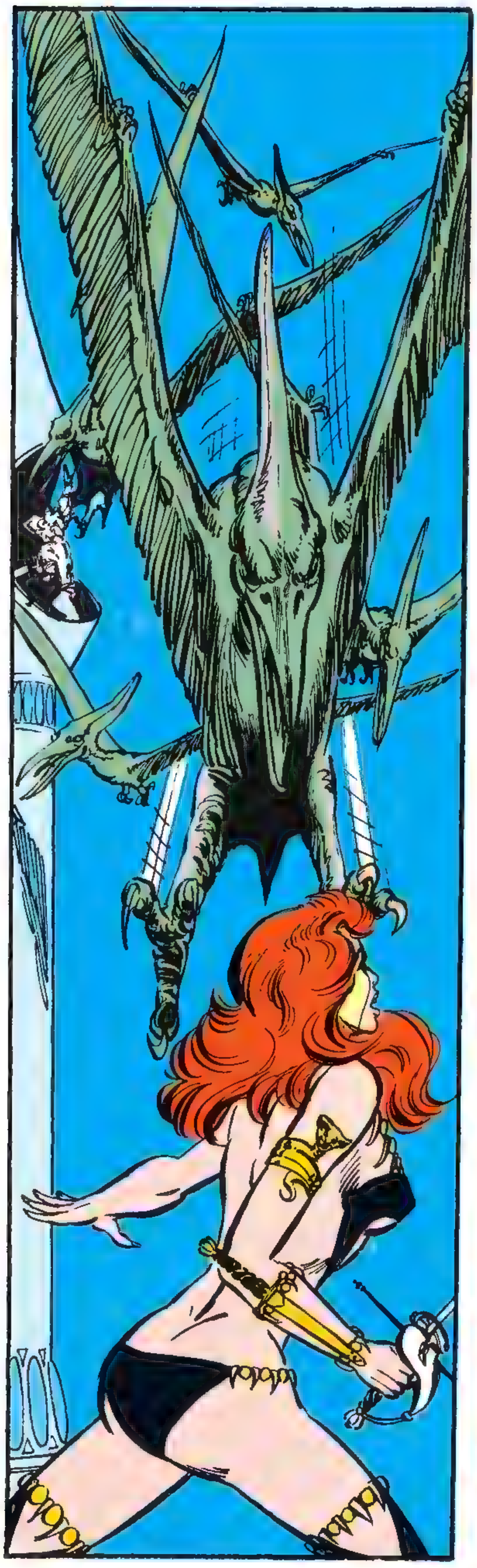
THE MERE *SIGHT* OF THESE AVIAN MONSTROSITIES DESCENDING LIKE DEMONS FROM SOME NAMELESS HELL WOULD BE ENOUGH TO FREEZE THE BLOOD OF THE STOUTEST WARRIOR, BUT THESE THREE HAVE SOMETHING SPECIAL-- THE SOMETHING IT TAKES TO MEET *FANG* AND *CLAW*...

...WITH *LEAD*...

...AND *STEEL*...

...AND *RAW GUTS!*





MORGAN!!

MY GOD!!
THAT THING'S
GOT MARIAH!

MY *FAULT!* I BROUGHT HER HERE TO DIE IN A STRANGE WORLD!

DON'T BLAME YOURSELF, MORGAN! THERE'S NOTHING ANYONE CAN DO.

WATCH OUT! THERE'S STILL SOME *LIFE* IN THAT ONE!

AND MAYBE A *CHANCE*... ONE *CRAZY* CHANCE!

MORGAN! ARE YOU TRYING TO GET *KILLED?*

THESE THINGS MUST HAVE A *ROOST* SOMEWHERE! IF THIS ONE IS GOING HOME--

YOU'RE A FOOL, MORGAN! A DAMNED FOOL!

I'M GOING WITH IT!

THE GODS ALONE KNOW WHAT THAT MAKES *ME!*

IN A WORLD BEYOND TIME, WHO CAN SAY HOW LONG MORGAN AND MACHISTE CLING TO THEIR INCREDIBLE CHARGER? MILE AFTER MILE OF THE UNTOLD SPLENDOR OF SKARTARIS PASS BENEATH THEM, UNTIL, AT LAST, THEIR DESTINATION IS IN SIGHT...

THE ETERNAL SUN OF SKARTARIS STRIKES BEAMS OF LIQUID FIRE FROM THE GLEAMING TOWERS OF A WONDROUS ***CITY IN THE SKY!***

HERE'S WHERE WE GET OFF! I DON'T THINK IT WOULD BE TOO HEALTHY TO LAND DOWN THERE WITH THOSE BEAUTIES!

I DON'T SEE ANY SIGN OF *MARIAH!*

IF SHE GOT AWAY, SHE MAY HAVE GONE INTO ONE OF THE BUILDINGS!

WELL, WE'RE NOT GOING TO FIND HER BY SITTING UP *HERE!* LET'S *GO!*

THIS THING MUST HAVE BEEN FLOATING AROUND UP HERE FOR *AGES* -- IT'S IN ROTTEN SHAPE!

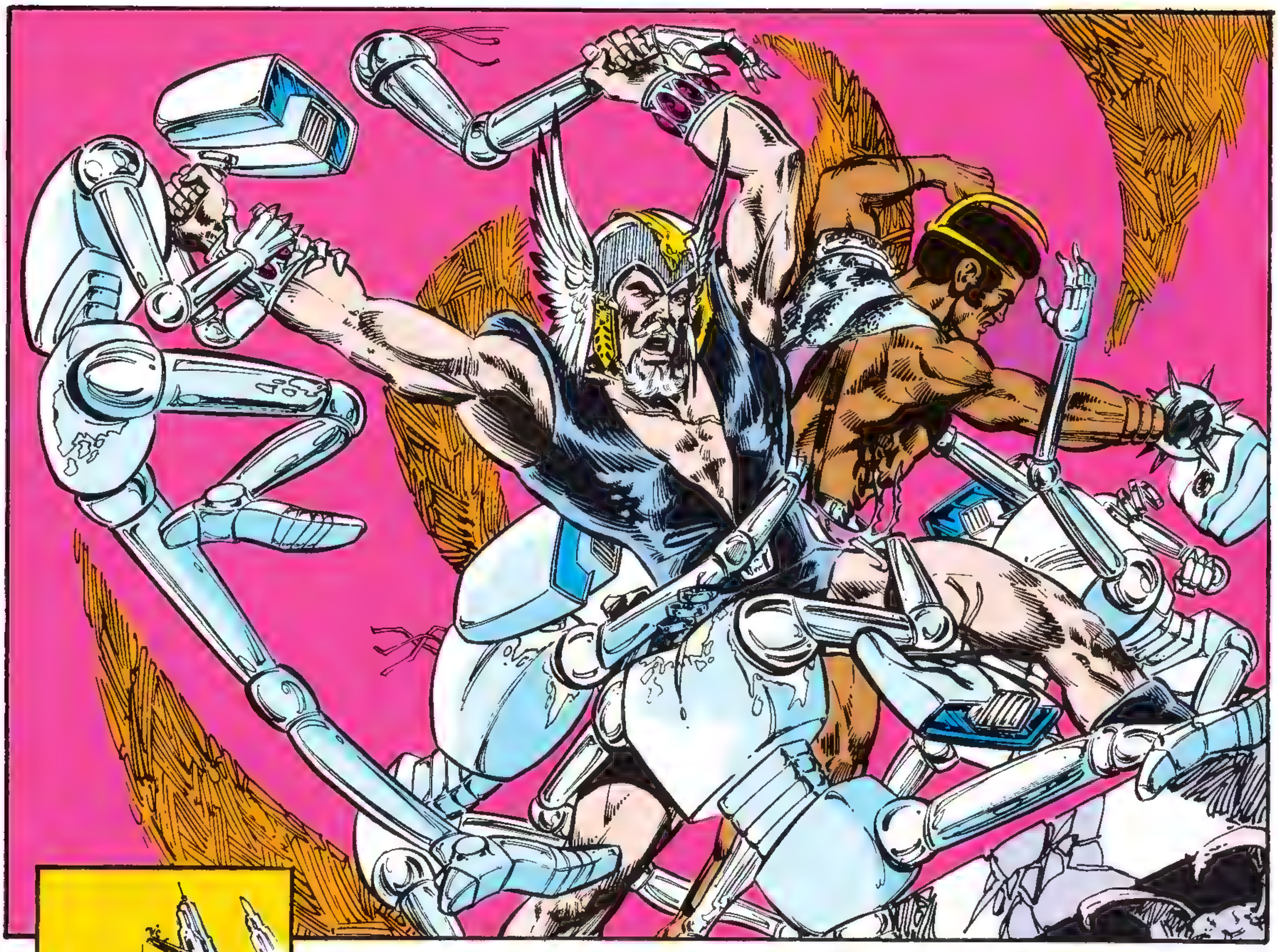
A LOT OF *PEOPLE* ARE LIKE THAT -- YOU DON'T SEE THE *REAL UGLINESS* UNTIL YOU GET UP CLOSE!

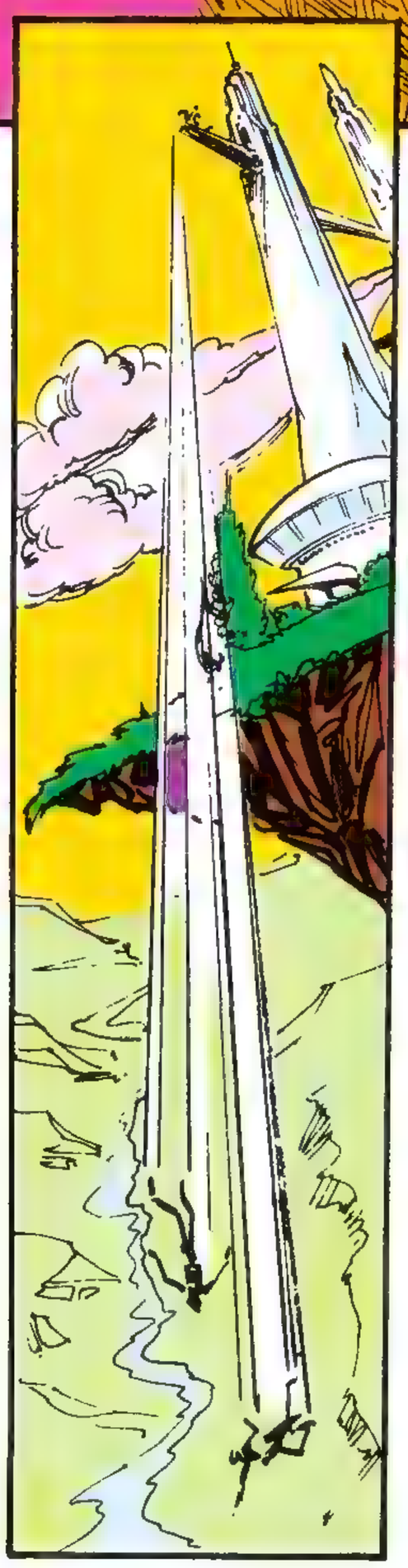
WHY, MACHISTE! YOU'RE A *PHILOSOPH--!*

INTRUDERS!!

INTRUDERS IN NOWAUUUURRRTH QUADRANT OFWRRREEEEE SECTION32LEVEL ATTACKATTACKATTACK ATTACKATTACK

ROBOTS!





WHAT *WERE* THOSE THINGS?
ROBOTS! SORT OF... *MAN-MADE SLAVES!*
ALL SLAVES ARE *MAN-MADE*, MORGAN!

I'LL SAY THIS FOR THOSE *RO-BAHTS*: THEY CERTAINLY ARE A *DETERMINED* BREED! I HAD TO *KILL* ONE OF THEM *THREE TIMES!*
I JUST HOPE *MARIAH* DIDN'T RUN INTO ANY OF THEM!

A RAPID SEARCH THROUGH DESERTED STREETS, AND...

MORGAN! I HEAR *VOICES* BEHIND THAT DOOR!

MARIAH!!

MORGAN! YOU *DID* COME AFTER ME!

AH! THESE MUST BE THE MEN YOU SPOKE OF SO HIGHLY!

WELCOME TO *SKYRA*, GENTLEMEN!

WON'T YOU JOIN US IN A GLASS OF THIS DELIGHTFUL WINE?

REALLY, MORGAN! MUST YOU *CAPITALISTS* ALL BE SO *RUDE*?

IF I DON'T GET SOME ANSWERS, YOU'RE GOING TO *SEE* "RUDE"!

NOW, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, AND WHO'S YOUR *FRIEND*?

I AM *TRAGG*!

WELL, *TRAGG*, JUST WHAT KIND OF PLACE ARE YOU *RUNNING* HERE? FIRST MARIAH IS *CARRIED OFF* BY A FLYING *WHATCHAMACALLIT*, AND THEN WE GET THE *WELCOME MAT* TREATMENT!

YOU MUST *FORGIVE* MY PETS! IT WAS A *MISTAKE*!

MOST FOOD SUPPLIES ON *SKYRA* ARE *SYNTHETICS*, I USE THE *BIRDS* TO HUNT FOR *MEAT* ON THE SURFACE BELOW!

YOU CAN IMAGINE MY ASTONISHMENT WHEN THEY RETURNED BEARING YOUR *LADY*! I FEAR THEY SHALL REQUIRE EXTENSIVE *RE-TRAINING*!

TRAGG TOLD ME THAT *SKYRA* WAS BUILT BY THE *ATLANTEANS* BEFORE THE *GREAT WAR*, TO SERVE AS AN AIRBORNE DEFENSE! *TRAGG* IS THE *KEEPER*!

BUT AREN'T THERE OTHERS? I MEAN, A PLACE THIS SIZE ... SURELY YOU DON'T RUN IT BY *YOURSELF*!

OH, BUT I *DO*! THE REST HAVE BEEN GONE SINCE JUST AFTER THE *GREAT WAR*!

SINCE MERE *HUMANS* COULD NOT POSSIBLY HANDLE THE TASK OF CONTROLLING *SKYRA*, AND *COMPUTERS* COULD NOT BE RELIED UPON TO MAKE LIFE-AND-DEATH DECISIONS, A *COMBINATION* OF THE TWO WAS DECIDED UPON.

THUS, *I* WAS CREATED!

YOU'RE A *CYBORG*!

PRECISELY! A *CYBERNETIC ORGANISM*... A *BLEND* OF HUMAN AND *MECHANICAL* PARTS!

SKYRA WAS BUILT TO LAST *FOREVER*! HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT THE BUILDERS MISCALCULATED THE *LENGTH* OF FOREVER!

FORTUNATELY, THEY DID A MUCH BETTER JOB ON *ME*!

EMBEDDED IN MY BRAIN ARE COMPUTER TERMINAL LINKS TO EVERYTHING IN *SKYRA*! WITH A MERE *THOUGHT* I CAN ACTIVATE THE ENTIRE ARMAMENT SYSTEM IN AN INSTANT! *WATCH*!

THIS IS THE PART *I* LIKE!

VERY *IMPRESSIVE*, TRAGG! NOW, IF YOU'LL SHOW US THE WAY *OUT*...

SHE'S RIGHT! I HAVE MANY WONDERS TO SHOW YOU!

MORGAN! WE CAN'T GO *YET*--THERE'S SO MUCH TO *SEE*... TO *STUDY*!

PERHAPS MY *COLLECTION* WOULD INTEREST YOU!

OKAY! WE'LL HAVE A QUICK LOOK AROUND, AND THEN YOU CAN FLY US BACK TO KIRO!

SAY ISN'T IT KIND OF *DARK* IN HERE?

AND *COLD*! IT FEELS LIKE--!

MACHISTE'S OBSERVATION IS CUT SHORT BY THE SUDDEN CLOSING OF A DOOR! THE *TRAP* IS *SPRUNG*!

HE *TRICKED* US!

TRAGG! WHAT'S GOING ON?

MORGAN'S *FEAR* BECOMES HORRIBLE REALITY AS THE LIGHTS BRIGHTEN AND A CHILLING VOICE CALLS...

I KNOW YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE, BUT I *INSIST* THAT YOU *STAY* FOR... *DINNER*!!

SO *THAT'S* WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHER PEOPLE! AFTER THE WAR, SUPPLIES STOPPED AND *TRAGG* TURNED TO ANOTHER SOURCE OF *FOOD*--*HUMAN FLESH*!

QUITE *CORRECT!* BUT YOU MUST *UNDERSTAND*... I AM AS FAR ABOVE MERE HUMANS AS YOU ARE ABOVE *CATTLE!*

THE *AUTOMATIC SYSTEM* WILL FINISH WITH YOU! I HAVE... *OTHER MATTERS* TO ATTEND!

WATCH OUT! THAT THING'S TRYING TO TURN US INTO A T.V. DINNER!

IN THE CONFINES OF THE CHAMBER, THERE IS NO *ESCAPE* FROM THE CHILLING BLAST THAT THREATENS TO TURN MEN INTO *STATUES*...

GETTING *NUMB!* CAN BARELY *MOVE!* GOT... TO... STOP... *SPRAY!*

MACHISTE! TRY TO... BREAK ICE AROUND MY... *RIGHT HAND!*

ONLY...CHANCE...

WITH A SUPREME EFFORT OF *WILL* MACHISTE DELIVERS THE BLOW WITH *SHATTERING FORCE*...

FREED FROM ITS CRYSTAL PRISON, MORGAN'S HAND COMES UP CARRYING THREE POUNDS OF GLITTERING STEEL...

BA-THOK!

YOU *DID IT!* HANG ON WHILE I GET US LOOSE!

I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE! JUST *HURRY!*

SHORTLY...

THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY TO OPEN THIS-- *AAHH!* THERE WE GO!

SURE! NO ONE ELSE EVER SURVIVED TO *GET* THIS FAR!

THAT WAS EASY ENOUGH!

GONE! TRAGG HAS TAKEN THE GIRL SOMEWHERE! WE'D BETTER *FIND* THEM!

SHE'LL BE OKAY FOR A WHILE AT LEAST! THERE'S SOMETHING WE'D BETTER TAKE CARE OF *FIRST!*

GIVE ME A HAND HAULING DOWN THESE *CURTAINS!*

USING MAKESHIFT MATERIALS AT HAND, MORGAN WORKS FEVERISHLY...

ARE YOU *SURE* THESE *GLIDERS* WILL WORK?

THEY'D *BETTER*... I'M BETTING *ALL OUR LIVES* ON THEM!

ELSEWHERE...

TAKE YOUR FILTHY HANDS OFF ME!

RESIGN YOURSELF TO YOUR FATE! THE *HUMAN* PART OF ME *STILL* CRAVES COMPANIONSHIP! *YOU* SHALL BE MY *BRIDE*--!

MARRY YOU? I'D RATHER DIE!

THEN YOU *SHALL*, MY DEAR! YOU *SHALL*!

TRAGG!

ONE MOVE AND YOU'RE WALLPAPER!

MORGAN! YOU ESCAPED FROM THE *CRYOGENIC CHAMBER*! AMAZING! I MUST ADMIT I *UNDERESTIMATED* YOU!

STOW IT!

MARIAH, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YES! LET'S JUST GET *OUT* OF HERE!

I'M AFRAID I CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO *DO* THAT!

YOU'RE SURPRISED I CAN ACTIVATE THE *FIRE DUCTS?*

YOU SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT I CONTROL *SKYRA* WITH MY *THOUGHTS!* A SMALL MISTAKE... BUT A *FATAL* ONE! *HAHAHAHAHA!*

YOU SLIMY VULTURE!

STAND A LITTLE CLOSER, AND WE'LL SEE HOW YOU LAUGH WITH MY *BLADE* IN YOUR *GUTS!*

THAT WOULD BE AN ACT OF INCALCULABLE *STUPIDITY* ON MY PART!

NO, MORGAN, THIS TIME *YOU LOSE!*

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, A TAWNY BLUR CROSSES THE FLOOR...

...AND *STEEL-JACKETED DEATH* CLAIMS *TRAGG*, THE *KEEPER* OF THE *CITY IN THE SKY!*

THANKS, MARIAH! THAT'S THE *SECOND* TIME YOU SAVED MY LIFE!

AT THE INSTANT OF TRAGG'S DEATH, THE AIRBORNE CITY BEGINS TO SHUDDER AND QUAKE.

THIRD! BUT WHO'S *COUNTING?*

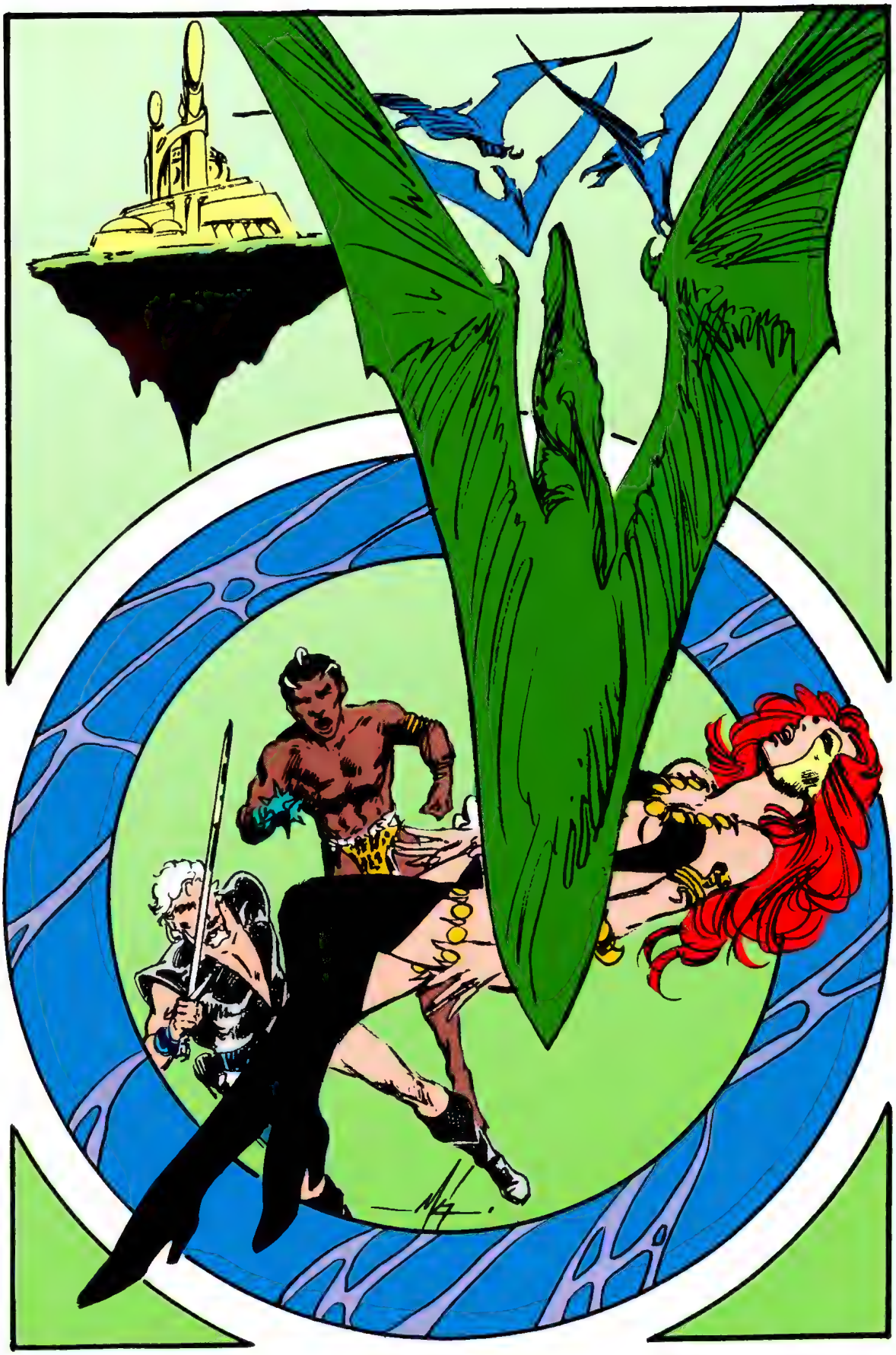
I SUGGEST YOU CONTINUE YOUR CONVERSATION *ELSEWHERE!*

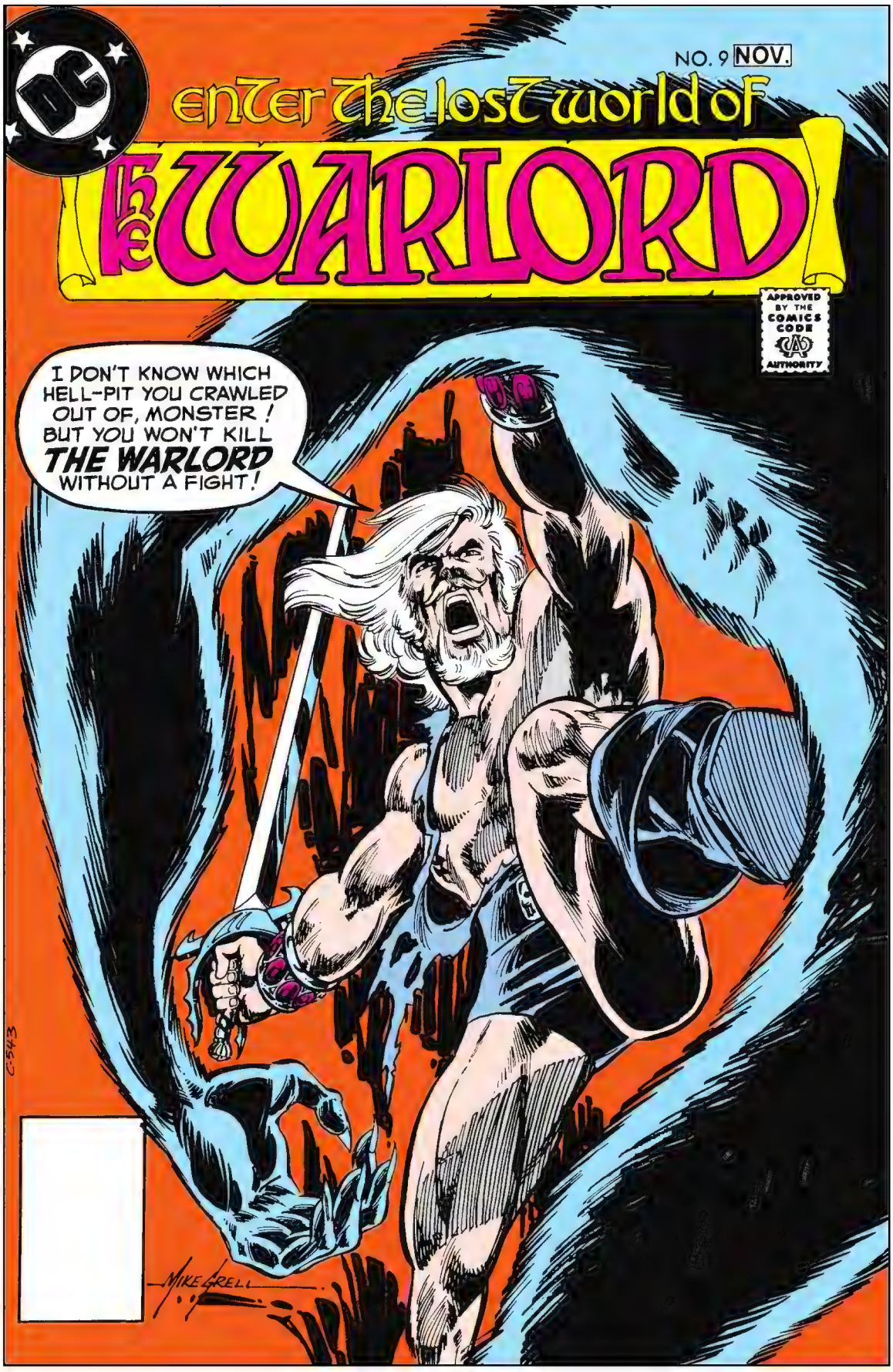
WITHOUT TRAGG'S *MIND* TO CONTROL IT, THIS PLACE IS COMING *APART!*

LET'S GET TO THOSE *GLIDERS* YOU MADE!

Epilogue:

MOMENTS LATER, THREE STRANGE-LOOKING CREATURES BREAK AWAY FROM ***SKYRA*** AND GLIDE GRACEFULLY TO EARTH ON MAN-MADE WINGS WHILE THE SHINING ***QUEEN*** OF THE ***CLOUDS*** PERISHES IN FLAMES...

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THE WARLORD
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
I DON'T KNOW WHICH HELL-PIT YOU CRAWLED OUT OF, MONSTER! BUT YOU WON'T KILL THE WARLORD WITHOUT A FIGHT!
MIKE GRELL
C-5543

THE BLIZZARD HAS COME ON SUDDENLY, AS DO ALL THINGS IN THE WORLD KNOWN AS SKARTARIS. FOR THREE DESPERATE PEOPLE IT BRINGS A PROMISE OF GLITTERING-WHITE, FROZEN DEATH.

A *BLIZZARD!* HOW THE DEVIL CAN THERE BE A *BLIZZARD* IN A *TROPICAL WORLD* WHERE THE *SUN ALWAYS SHINES?*

IT MUST HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE *PERPETUAL CLOUD COVER* OVER THIS VALLEY! NOT ENOUGH SUNLIGHT CAN PENETRATE TO WARM THINGS UP!

WELL, ONE THING'S FOR CERTAIN -- IF WE'RE GOING TO *SURVIVE*, WE'D BETTER FIND *SHELTER* ... AND *FAST!*

MORGAN! LOOK OVER THERE! SOMETHING IS MOVING!

J-4855

FROM THE SKY HE CAME, TO A WORLD OF ETERNAL SUNLIGHT AND ETERNAL SAVAGERY--TRAVIS MORGAN, A MAN WITH A LUST FOR ADVENTURE AND PASSION FOR FREEDOM! AS HIS FAME SPREADS, SO GROWS THE LEGEND OF...

The WARLORD

written and illustrated by
MIKE GRELL.

colored by
Liz Berube

LAIR OF THE SNOWBEAST

SCIENCE CALLS THIS HULKING HORROR *MEGALICTIS!*

THE NORTHWOODSMAN WOULD RECOGNIZE IT AS THE PREHISTORIC ANCESTOR OF A CREATURE WHO, POUND FOR POUND, IS THE MOST *VICIOUS, BLOODTHIRSTY* ANIMAL ON EARTH... THE *WOLVERINE!*

TRAVIS MORGAN COULD CARE LESS!

IN AN INSTANT HE IS BATTLING FOR HIS LIFE IN THE *BONE-CRUSHING GRIP* OF *TALONED CLAWS* WHICH DRAG HIM NEARER THOSE *SLAVERING JAWS!*

HE FEELS THE ANIMAL'S FETID BREATH HOT IN HIS FACE, AND, WITH ONE MIGHTY SURGE OF SUPERHUMAN EFFORT, TEARS HIMSELF FREE OF THE BEAST'S GRASP...

THE SLUG FROM A .44 MAGNUM CAN *SHATTER* THE *SKULL* OF A *CHARGING GRIZZLY BEAR*, AND IT'S DOUBTFUL THAT MORE THAN ONE SHOT IS REQUIRED TO DISPATCH *THIS* PREHISTORIC MONSTROSITY. STILL, MORGAN CAN HARDLY BE BLAMED FOR ADDING A LITTLE *EXTRA* INSURANCE... *SEVEN SHOTS* WORTH OF EXTRA INSURANCE, TO BE EXACT!

AS THE RUMBLING ECHOES FADE, TWO BLOODY FORMS ARE STRETCHED MOTIONLESS ON THE SNOW...

IS HE *ALIVE?*

I DON'T KNOW... HE'S AWFULLY *TORN UP!* IT LOOKS LIKE--!

OH, GOD! NO! NOT *ANOTHER* ONE!

SLOWLY APPEARING OUT OF THE SWIRLING SNOWS...

WHO ARE YOU?

TRAVELERS! WE ARE LOST. CAN YOU HELP US?

YOU WILL COME WITH US!

YES, OF COURSE. OUR FRIEND IS *BADLY HURT* AND HE NEEDS *MEDICAL ATTENTION--!*

YOUR FRIEND HAS SLAIN THE BEAST, BUT *IT* HAS *KILLED HIM ALSO!*

LEAVE HIM!

YOU CAN'T DO THAT! HE MAY STILL BE *ALIVE!*

PERHAPS, BUT HE *WON'T BE* FOR LONG!

YOU *CAN'T* JUST *LEAVE HIM* THERE! WHAT KIND OF *ANIMALS* ARE YOU?

MARIAH'S CRIES OF PROTEST ARE SWEPT AWAY IN THE HOWLING WINDS, AS SNOWFLAKES GENTLY COVER THE STILL FORM OF THE MAN KNOWN AS THE *WARLORD!*

BUT THE SPARK THAT BURNS WITHIN THE WARLORD WILL NOT BE SO EASILY EXTINGUISHED...

WELL, MORGAN, NOW WE FIND OUT JUST *HOW BADLY* YOU WANT TO *STAY ALIVE!*

AW, WHAT THE HELL--

THOUGH THE ICY WINDS CHILL HIM TO HIS VERY SOUL, MORGAN FEELS A FLUSH OF WARMTH SWEEP OVER HIM, AS THOUGH SOFT ARMS WERE GENTLY CRADLING HIM...

IS HE BEING BORNE SKYWARD BY A *VALKYRIE*, TO TAKE HIS PLACE AMONG HEROES IN *VALHALLAH*? HE CANNOT BE SURE...

HE ONLY KNOWS THAT TIME PASSES, AND WITH A MIGHTY EFFORT, HE FORCES HIMSELF BACK TO CONSCIOUSNESS...

UNNNGH! WHA...? WHERE AM I?

I'M IN A *CAVE*... BUT *HOW* DID I *GET HERE?* I DON'T REMEMBER--!

MY BACK! IT WAS TORN TO *SHREDS*... AND NOW IT'S *COMPLETELY HEALED!*

COULD I HAVE *DREAMED*...?

NO, IT WAS *REAL* ENOUGH! HERE'S WHAT'S LEFT OF MY *TUNIC!* WHOEVER BROUGHT ME HERE MUST HAVE A *FANTASTIC* KNOWLEDGE OF *MEDICAL SCIENCE*...

... OR *WITCHCRAFT!*

WHAT KIND OF PERSON COULD POSSESS SUCH *KNOWLEDGE*, AND *STILL* CHOOSE TO LIVE IN SUCH A *GOD-FORSAKEN WILDERNESS?*

A SUDDEN *CHILL*, PERHAPS A *WARRIOR'S INSTINCT* THAT SENSES THE PRESENCE OF *DEATH*, CAUSES MORGAN TO TURN...

CALL IT *YETI*, *SASQUATCH*, *BIG-FOOT*. IT MATTERS NOT. WHILE LESSER MEN WOULD STAND IN HORROR OF THIS GREAT SHAGGY BEAST, THE WARLORD *ACTS*...

WITH DESPERATE SPEED HE DIVES FOR HIS WEAPONS...

TOO LATE!

HE STRUGGLES HELPLESSLY AGAINST THE BONECRUSHING GRIP, AND FOR A MOMENT HE STARES INTO THE FACE OF DEATH...

LIKE SOME RAG DOLL, MORGAN IS SLAMMED AGAINST THE CAVE WALL WITH BONE-JARRING FORCE...

AND THEN THERE IS A *CHANGE*... SOMETHING IN THE EYES...

SLOWLY, ALMOST GENTLY, THE BEAST SETS MORGAN BACK ON HIS FEET...

YOU... COULD HAVE *KILLED* ME, BUT YOU *DIDN'T!* *WHY?*

IT WAS YOU! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO *BROUGHT ME HERE... TREATED MY WOUNDS!*

YOU SAVED MY LIFE!

BUT THAT'S *IMPOSSIBLE!* I MEAN, *SURELY* YOU COULDN'T... THAT IS, SOMEONE LIKE *YOU...!*

I MEAN...!

THE BEAST REMAINS SILENT, BUT ITS ANGUISH IS NONE THE LESS ELOQUENTLY EXPRESSED...

POOR DEVIL! THERE'S AN INTELLIGENT BRAIN *TRAPPED* INSIDE THAT SHAMBLING HULK!

FORGIVE ME, MY FRIEND! I SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO JUDGE A PERSON BY *OUTWARD APPEARANCES.* IT'S WHAT IS IN THE *HEART* THAT COUNTS.

I THANK YOU FOR SAVING MY LIFE. NOW THERE IS ONE *OTHER* SERVICE YOU CAN PERFORM.

MY *COMPANIONS* WERE TAKEN *PRISONER* BY A GROUP OF WARRIORS. DO YOU KNOW *WHERE* THEY MAY HAVE BEEN *TAKEN?*

IN ANSWER, THE SNOWBEAST LEADS MORGAN TO THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE...

A *CITY*... BUILT ON THAT TOWER OF *ROCK!*

AND A *BRIDGE* LEADING ACROSS TO THE RIM OF THE VALLEY!-- *A WAY OUT!*

IF I'M GOING OUT INTO THE STORM AGAIN, I'LL NEED SOME *NEW CLOTHES!* I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND IF I HELP MYSELF...

BUT THE BEAST LAYS A HAND ON MORGAN'S SHOULDER, AS IF IN WARNING...

I *KNOW* THERE IS DANGER, BUT MY *FRIENDS* ARE THERE. I *CANNOT* DESERT THEM!

DON'T WORRY, I SHALL TRY VERY HARD NOT TO THROW AWAY THE LIFE YOU SAVED!

AND SO THE WARLORD STRIDES BOLDLY INTO DANGER, LEAVING BEHIND A TRAGIC CREATURE WHO FOR A FEW PRECIOUS MOMENTS HAD KNOWN *FRIENDSHIP*...

AT LENGTH...

ONE GUARD! THERE MAY BE *MORE* HIGHER UP. THAT MEANS I WON'T BE ABLE TO USE THE ROAD. STILL--

--I CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE THIS FELLOW DISCOVER ME AND SOUND THE ALARM!

WITH THE AGILITY OF A CAT, MORGAN QUICKLY SCALES THE SHEER CLIFF...

I WON'T BE NEEDING *THIS* ANY LONGER... I'M *ABOVE* THE LEVEL OF *FRIGID AIR*.

THAT *SUNLIGHT* SURE FEELS GOOD!

AT LAST HE REACHES THE TOP, WHERE A SCENE OF STARK *SAVAGERY* GREETS HIM...

LOOKS LIKE I'M JUST IN TIME! THE PARTY'S STARTING TO GET A LITTLE *ROUGH!*

I'D BETTER BORROW A ROUTINE FROM JOHNNY WEISSMULLER!

WITH A SAVAGE *WAR CRY* ON HIS LIPS, MORGAN HURLS HIMSELF INTO THE *JAWS OF DEATH*, LEAVING BEHIND HIM A WAKE OF *CRUSHED* AND *BLEEDING* BODIES...

YET EVEN THE *SAVAGE FURY* OF THE *WARLORD* CANNOT STAND LONG AGAINST IMPOSSIBLE ODDS! HE IS SOON CUT OFF AND SURROUNDED BY A SEA OF SWEATING, CURSING WARRIORS THAT THREATEN TO CRUSH HIM BY THEIR SHEER NUMBER...

SUDDENLY, A SHRIEKING *HORROR* DESCENDS UPON THE SCENE...

AIIIEEEE!!

THE *SNOWDEMON* HAS COME!

RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

A FEW HARDY SOULS HESITATE FOR A MOMENT, AND ARE *MANGLED* BEYOND RECOGNITION BY THE BLUDGEON-LIKE BLOWS OF THE *SNOWBEAST*...

MACHISTE, THAT *THING* HAS GOT *MORGAN*! DO SOMETHING! *STOP IT!*

MAY *RA* GUIDE MY AIM!

AARRRRGGG

NO!

WHY? WHY DID YOU HAVE TO *KILL* IT? IT WAS ONLY TRYING TO *SAVE ME!*

I--I'M *SORRY*, MORGAN! I DIDN'T *UNDERSTAND...!*

THAT DOESN'T GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO *DESTROY* SOMETHING, SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU *DON'T UNDERSTAND* IT!

SUDDENLY, AMID A BLINKING BURST OF BRILLIANT LIGHT, A STARTLING TRANSFORMATION OCCURS...

GRIEVE NOT FOR ME, MORGAN! RATHER, REJOICE, FOR I AM FREE AT LAST!

MY NAME IS TANEA. LONG AGO, IN A TIME OF PLAGUE, I CONSULTED THE BLACK ARTS IN SEARCH OF THE KNOWLEDGE TO SAVE MY PEOPLE.

BUT GREAT KNOWLEDGE BORE GREAT PRICE! I WAS IMPRISONED IN THE BODY OF THE BEAST UNTIL SOMEONE CAME WHO COULD SEE BEYOND THE UGLY EXTERIOR OF THE BEAST TO THE BEAUTY WITHIN. THAT "SOMEONE" WAS YOU, MORGAN!

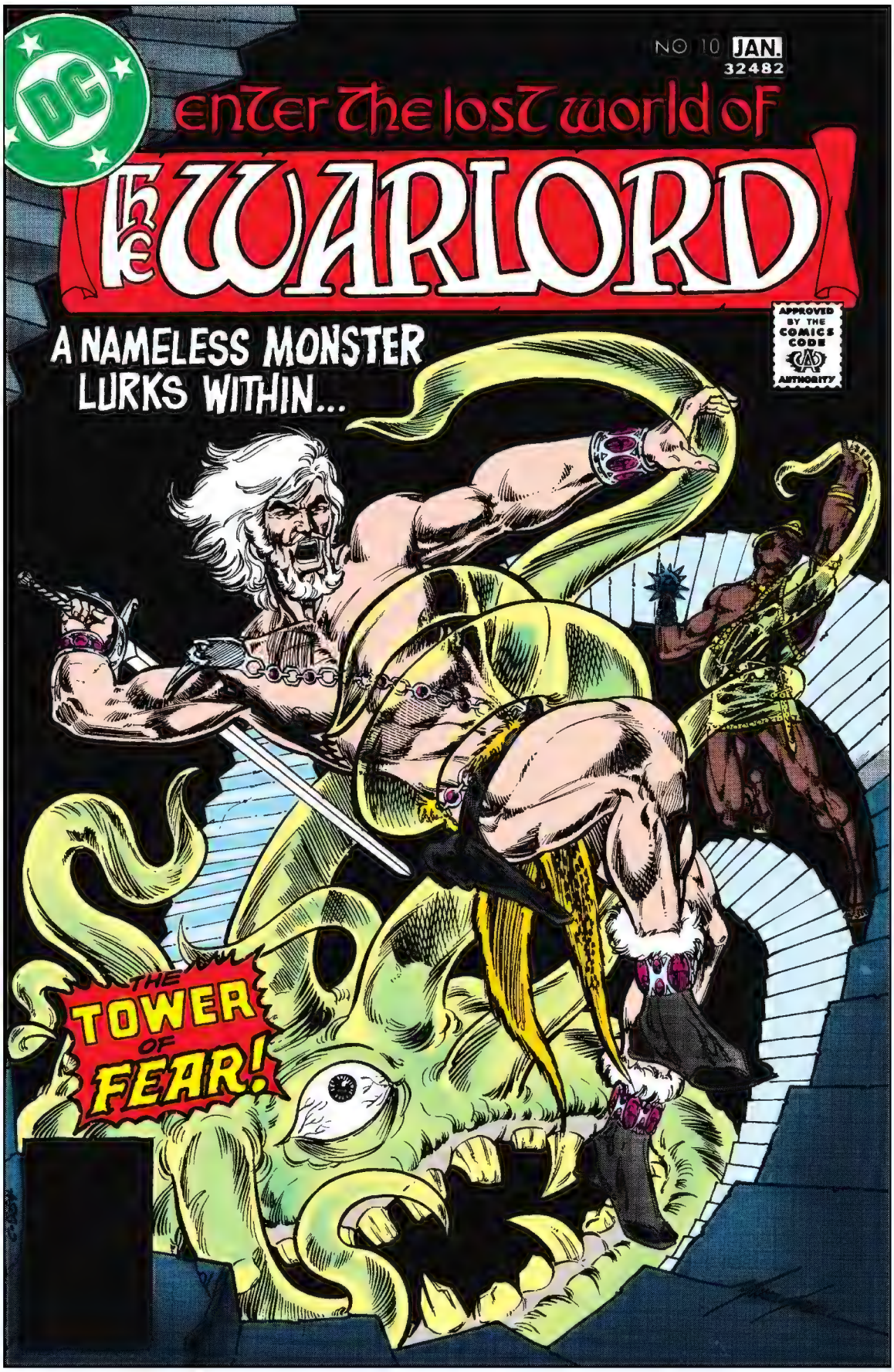
I MUST GO NOW, BUT MY HEART WILL REMAIN EVER WITH YOU.

FAREWELL, MY WARRIOR!

YOU WANT TO EXPLAIN JUST WHAT THAT WAS ALL ABOUT?

I DON'T THINK I CAN, BUT I'LL TRY... LATER!

RIGHT NOW, WE'D BETTER PUT SOME MILES BETWEEN US AND THIS CITY BEFORE THOSE WARRIORS COME BACK.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enter the lost world of
the WARLORD
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
A NAMELESS MONSTER LURKS WITHIN...
THE TOWER OF FEAR!

THE ETERNAL SUN OF SKARTARIS BEATS RELENTLESSLY DOWN UPON A SMALL CARAVAN...

...WHICH IS THE BASIC *FLAW* IN THE *CAPITALIST PHILOSOPHY!* ANY *FOOL* COULD SEE--!

DOES SHE *ALWAYS* TALK THIS MUCH?

NO, NOT *ALWAYS*...

...BUT WITH A *CAPITALIST* AND A *MONARCHIST* AS A *CAPTIVE AUDIENCE*, I THINK SHE FEELS THAT IT'S HER *DUTY* TO SHOW US THE ERROR OF OUR WAYS.

HEY! THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON DOWN THERE! IT LOOKS LIKE...

MY GOD!!

FROM THE SKY HE CAME, TO A WORLD OF ETERNAL SUNLIGHT AND ETERNAL SAVAGERY--TRAVIS MORGAN, A MAN WITH A LUST FOR ADVENTURE AND PASSION FOR FREEDOM! AS HIS FAME SPREADS, SO GROWS THE LEGEND OF...

The WARLORD

TOWER OF FEAR

written and illustrated by

MIKE GRELL

LETTERED BY: BEN ODA
COLORED BY: LIZ BERUBE
EDITED BY: LARRY HAMA

HIS *RAGE* IS *OUTRAGE!*

HIS *REACTION* IS *ACTION,* SWIFTLY AND DEADLY!

HIS *LEGEND* IS WRITTEN IN *BLOOD* AND *FIRE* ACROSS A SAVAGE WORLD, FOR HE IS *TRAVIS MORGAN*--HE IS *THE WARLORD!*

YOU DIDN'T SAVE ANY FOR *ME!*

SORRY! GUESS I GOT A LITTLE *CARRIED AWAY!*

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YES...BUT YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE *INTERFERED!*

SOMETIMES HE CAN'T HELP HIMSELF!

SHUT UP, MARIAH!

WHAT DO YOU *MEAN*-- WE SHOULDN'T HAVE INTERFERED? THEY WERE TRYING TO *KILL* YOU!

I AM *ASHIYA*, THE CHOSEN ONE! WHEN MY PEOPLE WERE CONQUERED, THE *MASK OF LIFE*, THE *SYMBOL* OF OUR *NATION*, WAS TAKEN FROM US!

I WAS TO BE *SACRIFICED* THAT THE *MASK* MIGHT BE *RETURNED TO* MY PEOPLE! NOW ALL IS *LOST!*

WHY DON'T YOUR PEOPLE *STAND UP* AND *FIGHT*-- *TAKE BACK* WHAT IS *RIGHTFULLY THEIRS?*

IT IS MY *DESTINY!* THE *REASON* FOR MY *EXISTENCE*...

...TO *DIE* THAT MY PEOPLE MIGHT BE *FREE!*

THERE IS NO WARRIOR *MIGHTY* ENOUGH TO RETRIEVE THE *MASK OF LIFE*, FOR IT LIES ATOP THE *TOWER OF FEAR!*

THE TOWER OF FEAR... ITS DARKLY GLEAMING WALLS RISE ABOVE THE JUNGLE LIKE AN EBONY STAKE THROUGH THE HEART OF A WORLD...

NO GUARDS!

THEY AREN'T NECESSARY! FEW MEN ENTER THE TOWER VOLUNTARILY!

AND NO ONE HAS EVER SURVIVED TO TELL WHAT HORRORS LIE WITHIN!

THEN I GUESS WE'LL BE THE FIRST! LET'S GET ON WITH IT, YOU LADIES BETTER STAY HERE!

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE! I'VE HAD ABOUT ENOUGH OF YOUR CHAUVINISTIC ATTITUDES!

I'LL GO WHEREVER I DAMN WELL PLEASE!

SO THAT'S THE TOWER OF FEAR! IT EVEN LOOKS EVIL!

CHAUVINIST?!! I THOUGHT I WAS A CAPITALIST!

I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF... AND I'LL WAGER I CAN REACH THE TOP OF THAT TOWER BEFORE EITHER OF YOU MEN!

IT'S A BET!!!!!

THE REAL EVIL LIES WITHIN!

JUST NAME THE STAKES, LADY!

ALMOST TOO EASILY, THE GREAT PORTAL YIELDS TO MORGAN'S HAND...

...LIKE THE JAWS OF A TRAP WAITING TO SPRING SHUT ON NEW VICTIMS.

...IT LOOKS LIKE YOU *LOSE!*

ABRUPTLY...

MORGAN! YOU DIRTY SON OF A---!

SORRY, MARIAH...

YOU *MISERABLE!!* IF YOU *DIE* IN THERE BEFORE I GET *MY HANDS* ON YOU, I'LL *I'LL KILL YOU!!!*

I *HATE* MYSELF WHEN I DO THINGS LIKE THIS!

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU CAN *STAND* TO *LIVE* WITH YOURSELF!

AT LEAST, WE WON'T HAVE TO *WORRY* ABOUT HER NOW.

IF THE STORY ASHIYA TELLS IS *HALF TRUE*, WE'LL HAVE *ENOUGH* TROUBLE *STAYING ALIVE* IN HERE *OURSELVES!*

THEIR WAY IS CLEAR -- AN AGE-WORN STAIRCASE SPIRALS EVER UPWARD INTO THE HEART OF THE TOWER...

WELL, HERE GOES! *FOLLOW THE YELLOW-BRICK ROAD!*

BOLDLY THEY CLIMB INTO THE DIM HALF-LIGHT THAT SEEMS TO SEEP THROUGH THE VERY WALLS OF THE *TOWER OF FEAR!*

WHILE, IN THE DEPTHS, THERE IS A *STIRRING...*

...A STIRRING WHICH QUICKLY BECOMES A RISING *HORROR!!*

OF ALL THE *PRIMITIVE FEARS* THAT HAVE *HAUNTED* MAN THROUGH THE AGES, THERE CAN BE *NONE GREATER* THAN THE *SHEER HORROR* OF BEING *EATEN ALIVE!*

THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THE *TOWER OF FEAR* IS WORTHY OF ITS GRIM TITLE, FOR HERE IS *TERROR INCARNATE!*

TERROR ENOUGH, PERHAPS, TO DRIVE A MAN *INSANE*...

...FOR HOW ELSE CAN MORGAN'S ACTIONS BE EXPLAINED?

WITH A SAVAGE WAR CRY, HE PLUNGES HEADLONG TOWARD THE HORROR WAITING BELOW...

THEN AGAIN, THE *WARLORD* IS *NOT LIKE* OTHER MEN!

AN INHUMAN SHRIEK OF AGONY FILLS THE TOWER, AND MORGAN IS BATTERED BY THE VIOLENT DEATH-THROES OF THE GRISLY ABOMINATION...

AND AS SUDDENLY AS IT CAME...

GONE... BACK INTO WHATEVER *HELL* SPAWNED IT!

THE REST OF THE LONG, ARDUOUS CLIMB IS ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT INCIDENT, AND AT LAST THEIR GOAL IS IN SIGHT...

I DON'T LIKE THIS, MORGAN! IT'S *TOO* EASY!

I KNOW! JUST STAY ON YOUR GUARD!

SUDDENLY...

LOOK, THERE!

IT STARTS AS A PINPOINT OF LIGHT, AND SWIFTLY BECOMES A SWIRLING MASS OF GLOWING ENERGY!

WITH A RENDING SHRIEK, THE VERY FABRIC OF TIME AND SPACE IS TORN ASUNDER, AND THROUGH THIS PORTAL BURSTS A SCREAMING, GIBBERING HORDE OF INHUMANITY.

WITH THE SAVAGERY OF BERSERKERS, MORGAN AND MACHISTE BATTLE FOR THEIR LIVES UNTIL THEIR MUSCLES CRACK WITH EACH BLOW AND THEIR PRECARIOUS BATTLEGROUND BECOMES SLIPPERY WITH GORE...

...AND STILL THE STREAM OF HORROR POURS FORTH...

WE'VE GOT TO GET TO THAT *DOORWAY!*

RIGHT! TRY GOING *UNDER!*

MADE IT! COME ON!

I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU! JUST GET THAT *DOOR* OPEN!

HEY, LET GO!

AS THE DOOR SWINGS WIDE, THE *BRILLIANT LIGHT* OF ETERNAL SUN FLOODS THE *TOWER OF FEAR...*

THEY CAN'T STAND THE LIGHT!

AS MORGAN AND MACHISTE REACH SAFETY BEHIND THE DOOR...

THEY WON'T FOLLOW US NOW!

I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK YOU'D *NEVER* GET HERE!

MARIAH! HOW DID **YOU** GET HERE? THIS IS *IMPOSSIBLE!*

I'M SURPRISED AT YOU, MORGAN. YOU SHOULD KNOW, WHERE A *WOMAN* IS CONCERNED, *NOTHING* IS IMPOSSIBLE!

YOU *MEN* WITH YOUR *BULGING MUSCLES* AND *MICROSCOPIC BRAINS!* YOUR SOLUTION TO EVERY PROBLEM IS *BRUTE FORCE!*

NEITHER OF YOU PAID ANY ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT HALF OF THE STATUARY AT THE BASE OF THE TOWER WAS *FLOATING* A FOOT OFF THE GROUND ON *ANTI-GRAVITY DISCS!*

"IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER TO REMOVE ENOUGH WEIGHT FROM ONE OF THE DISCS TO MAKE IT LIFT ME UP TO THE OUTSIDE OF THE TOWER WALL..."

"IT WAS RATHER LIKE RIDING AN ELEVATOR."

WELL, DON'T JUST *STAND* THERE!

OR PERHAPS YOU'D *PREFER* TO *RETURN* THE WAY YOU *CAME!*

UNDER THE ADDED WEIGHT OF TWO EXTRA PASSENGERS, THE DISC GENTLY DESCENDS THE TOWER. SHORTLY...

THE MASK! YOU HAVE DONE THE *IMPOSSIBLE!* MY PEOPLE OWE YOU A GREAT DEBT.

FORGET IT... WE WERE GLAD TO BE OF SERVICE! YOU DON'T OWE US ANYTHING.

NO, BUT *YOU TWO OWE ME* SOMETHING!

WE HAD A ***BET,*** REMEMBER?

LATER, AS THE THREE WANDERERS CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MACHISTE?

TRYING TO MAKE THIS *CURSED CROWN FIT!*

IT KEEPS *SLIPPING DOWN* AROUND MY *EARS!*

I THINK IT MAKES YOU LOOK... ER... *DISTINCTIVE!*

I HOPE YOU'VE LEARNED A *LESSON* ABOUT WOMEN!

DON'T WORRY, IT WILL BE A LONG TIME BEFORE I *UNDERESTIMATE YOU* AGAIN!

AND *LONGER STILL* BEFORE I MAKE ANY MORE ***BETS*** WITH YOU!

EPILOGUE

AND WHAT OF THE GIRL ASHIYA? WITNESS ...

MUCH AS THIS FORM *PLEASES* ME, I MUST GIVE IT UP.

IT TAKES TOO MUCH OF MY ENERGIES TO *MAINTAIN* IT...

...AND I WILL NEED *ALL* OF MY *POWERS* FOR THE *TASK AT HAND!*

I HAVE COME, *MASTER!*

AND I BRING *THE POWER!*

WHAT SWEET IRONY THAT IT WAS PLACED IN MY HANDS BY YOUR GREATEST ENEMY.

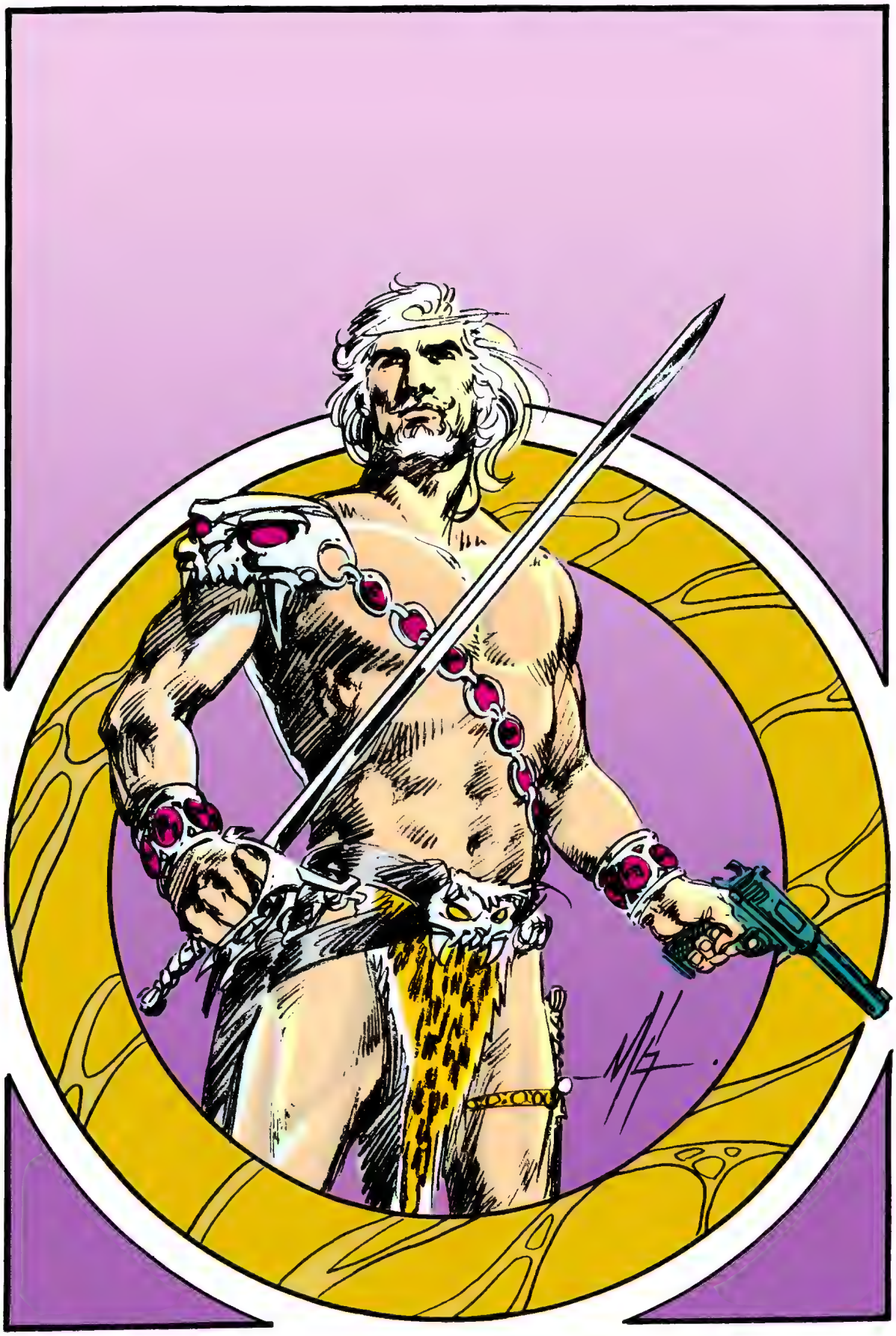
HE EVEN *SAVED* ME FROM A GROUP OF FOOLS WHO WOULD HAVE SLAIN ME FOR A *WITCH!*

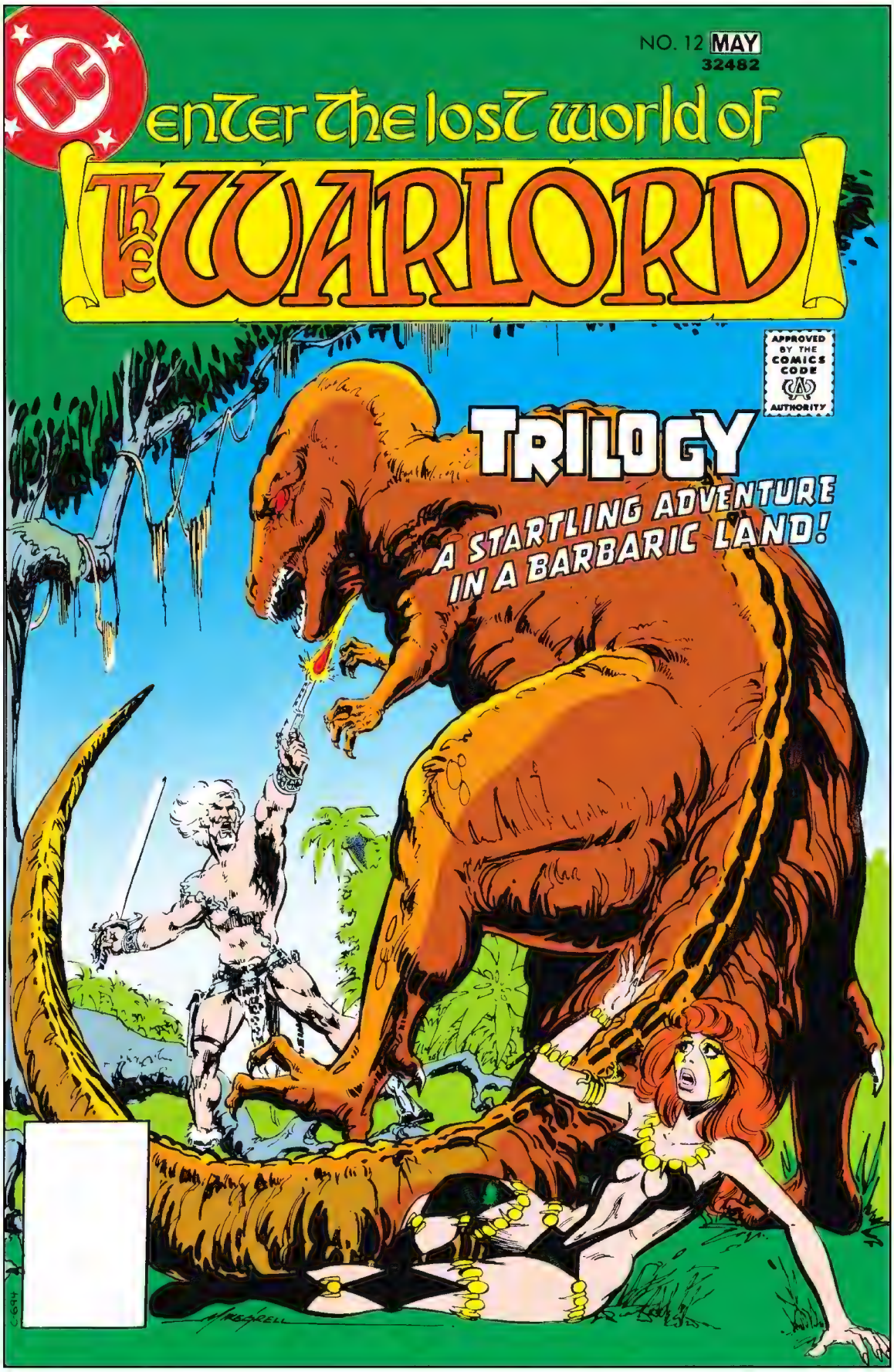
THERE IS A CRACKLING OF HELLFIRE ENERGY AS THE WITHERED CORPSE IS ROCKED WITH SPASMS OF RETURNING LIFE! A RUSH OF AIR FLOODS SHRIVELED LUNGS AND BLOOD ONCE AGAIN SURGES THROUGH DRIED VEINS...

WHAT WAS ONCE A MOULDERING CADAVER NOW TREMBLES WITH THE VIBRANCY OF NEW LIFE...

...EVEN AS THE *WORLD* WILL TREMBLE ONCE AGAIN TO THE NAME...

...DEIMOS!

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enter the lost world of
THE WARLORD
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
TRILOGY
A STARTLING ADVENTURE IN A BARBARIC LAND!

The teeming port of Bakwele is a prime example of Antediluvian culture, filled with all the wonders and dangers of this strange world of eternal sunlight.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MARIAH?

I'M FINALLY GETTING DOWN TO THE BUSINESS OF WHY I *CAME* TO YOUR WORLD, MACHISTE. I'M TRYING TO CAPTURE SOME OF THE INTERESTING CHARACTER OF LIFE IN SKARTARIS.

AND SPEAKING OF *INTERESTING* CHARACTERS..!

HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT, "SCARING UP A ***MARTINI***"!

COME ON, I'LL HELP YOU LOOK FOR HIM.

NEVER MIND! I THINK WE JUST ***FOUND*** HIM!

THE CITY OF EARTH

FROM THE SKY HE CAME, TO A WORLD OF ETERNAL SUNLIGHT AND ETERNAL SAVAGERY--TRAVIS MORGAN, A MAN WITH A LUST FOR ADVENTURE AND PASSION FOR FREEDOM! AS HIS FAME SPREADS, SO GROWS THE LEGEND OF...

The WARLORD

TRILOGY

MIKE GRELL

THAT'S **MORGAN** ALL RIGHT!

I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN WE'D FIND HIM IN SOME TAVERN, DRINKING AND BRAWLING AND ACTING LIKE A SAVAGE!

AH, YES! A MAN AFTER MY OWN HEART.

WHO IS THIS MAN THAT TAKES FROM LIFE ALL THAT IT WILL GIVE AND MORE, AND FACES DEATH WITH A SAVAGE SMILE?

IN ANOTHER WORLD AND ANOTHER TIME HE WAS KNOWN SIMPLY AS **TRAVIS MORGAN.**

WHEN LEGENDS ARE ETCHED IN HISTORY, MEN WILL CALL HIM THE **WARLORD!**

DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD HELP?

WHICH SIDE?

I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN.

THAT MAN! SOMETIMES HE ***INFURIATES*** ME AS MUCH AS HE ***PUZZLES*** ME!

SOMETIMES I WONDER ***WHY*** I LET HIM TALK ME INTO ***COMING*** HERE!

WHY ***DID*** YOU COME HERE?

MORGAN PROMISED ME A WORLD OF WONDER AND A LIFE OF ADVENTURE... SOMETHING I WOULD NEVER KNOW IN MY OWN WORLD!

ARE YOU SURE THAT'S ***ALL?***

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY ***THAT?***

SIMPLY, THAT MORGAN IS A ***MAN*** AND YOU ARE... MOST ***DEFINITELY***... A ***WOMAN!***

I...TOLD YOU BEFORE, THE MAN ***INFURIATES*** ME!

AND SO DO ***YOU!***

I?! FOR WHAT REASON?

BECAUSE YOU PROFESS TO BE A ***JUST MONARCH***, AND YET YOU LEAVE YOUR PEOPLE LEADERLESS TO GO ADVENTURING WITH MORGAN!

THAT IS TRUE, BUT MY PEOPLE HAVE PROVEN QUITE CAPABLE OF RULING ***THEMSELVES***, AND I FEAR AT TIMES THEY FIND ME MORE OF AN ***EMBARRASS-MENT*** THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

BUT IF YOU'RE ASKING WHY A MAN LIKE MORGAN COMMANDS MY LOYALTY, I WILL TELL YOU.

"FOLLOWING OUR ESCAPE FROM SHEBAL'S ***SCHOOL OF GLADIATORS***, WE WERE AN ARMY WITHOUT DISCIPLINE. MORGAN DREW US TOGETHER UNDER HIS BANNER AND IGNITED A SPARK OF LIBERTY AGAINST THE DARKNESS OF OPPRESSION."

"THE SPARK BECAME A ***FLAME***, AND THE FLAME BURNED IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF ALL WHO HEARD HIS CALL TO ARMS."

"JUST BEFORE A RAID ON THE FORTRESS AT CALAMDHAR, MORGAN RODE AMONG THE TROOPS..."

YOU! BOY! WHAT ARE ***YOU*** DOING HERE?

IT IS SAID THAT ***ANYONE*** WHO IS WILLING TO FIGHT WILL BE WELCOMED TO THE ***CAUSE!***

CAUSE? WHAT CAUSE?

WHY, THE GREAT CAUSE, SIR!

THE CAUSE WHICH HAS RALLIED FREE MEN AND SLAVES ALIKE TO THE EAGLE BANNER OF THE WARLORD.

LIBERTY, EQUALITY, AND JUSTICE FOR ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD.

HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS, BOY?

...AND MEN WHO USE MIGHT FOR RIGHT!

I WOULD BE ONE OF THESE MEN.

THE PEOPLE TELL THE PEOPLE, AND THE WORD SPREADS AS SWIFT AS THE WIND--TALES OF JUSTICE, RETRIBUTION...

TELL ME, SON, HAVE YOU EVER KILLED A MAN?

OH, NO, SIR! BUT I'M SURE THAT I WOULD BE QUITE GOOD AT IT.

I AM SMALL AND AGILE AND MY SWORD IS VERY SHARP!

SO IT IS. BUT IT TAKES **MORE** THAN A SWORD TO MAKE A **WARRIOR,** BOY...

... AND **MORE** THAN A **WARRIOR** TO MAKE A **NEW WORLD!**

BUT I'VE COME SO **FAR--!**

THE ROAD TO MANHOOD IS NEVER SHORT. DON'T RUSH IT, BOY.

GOD KNOWS THERE WILL BE **ENOUGH** TIME FOR **KILLING** AND **BLEEDING** AND **DYING!**

GIVE YOURSELF A **CHANCE** TO KNOW SOME OF THE **SWEETER** THINGS IN LIFE.

IF YOU CHOOSE THE WARRIOR'S WAY, THE **BLOODLETTING** STARTS **EARLY** AND ENDS ONLY WITH YOUR--

MORGAN! SOLDIERS ARE **ATTACKING** OUR EAST FLANK.

ALL RIGHT, I'M COMING.

"SUDDENLY THE EARTH SHOOK AND THE JUNGLE CAME ALIVE WITH THE THUNDER OF GIANT FOOTSTEPS..."

"MORGAN WAS IN ACTION IN THE SPACE OF A HEARTBEAT..."

"THE ROAR OF THE BEAST WAS DROWNED OUT BY THE MIGHTY VOICE OF THE THING MORGAN CALLS ***PISTOL***."

"SCREAMING IN AGONY, THE BEAST TURNED HIS RAGE ON MORGAN..."

WELL, YOUNG FELLOW, IT SEEMS THERE IS *MORE* OF THE *WARRIOR* IN YOU THAN I *THOUGHT*.

THEN YOU'LL LET ME *JOIN* YOU?

WHAT'S YOUR NAME, BOY?

I AM CALLED ATON.!

I HAVE A ***QUEST*** FOR YOU, ***ATON!*** A VERY ***GREAT*** QUEST!

YOU SHALL BE MY ***HERALD!*** RETURN TO YOUR VILLAGE AND CARRY THE WORD TO ***ALL!***

TELL THEM OF THE ***DREAM*** WE HAD OF A WORLD WHERE MEN ARE ***FREE*** AND ***JUSTICE*** MEANS ***JUSTICE FOR ALL!***

IF OUR CAUSE FAILS ON THE BATTLEFIELD, IT WILL LIVE ON IN YOU!

NOW, ***GO!***

WHO WAS THE **BOY**, MORGAN?

WE'RE NOT AN ARMY ANYMORE, BUT MORGAN'S WAR STILL GOES ON.

THAT'S THE ***FUTURE*** OF THIS BLOODY WORLD!

COME ON, MACHISTE, WE'VE GOT A ***BATTLE*** TO FIGHT!

HE'S A MAN WITH A ***DREAM***. AND ***DREAMERS***, THEY SAY, ARE THE ***CHOSEN*** OF THE ***GODS!***

THE RUSSIAN GIRL IS SILENT... THOUGHTFUL. PERHAPS SHE HAS SEEN A SIDE OF THE MAN SHE DID NOT KNOW EXISTED. COULD IT BE, SHE WONDERS, THAT THERE IS MORE TO ***TRAVIS MORGAN*** THAN THE HARD-DRINKING, HARD-FIGHTING BRAWLER SHE SEES BEFORE HER?

PERHAPS HE DOES INDEED HAVE COMPASSION FOR HIS FELLOW MAN. STILL, AN INCIDENT FROM THE PAST CREEPS INTO HER MEMORY.

"IT HAPPENED JUST AFTER I ARRIVED IN YOUR WORLD."

"I WAS ENTHRALLED BY THE BEAUTY OF THIS STRANGE NEW LAND AND HAD NOT YET SEEN ITS SAVAGERY..."

WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?

PERHAPS I HAVE BEEN ***WRONG*** TO JUDGE HIM ACCORDING TO OUR VARIED POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES, BUT THERE WAS AN INCIDENT THAT I CANNOT FORGET...

YOU'LL SEE. JUST BE QUIET AND WATCH.

THERE! LOOK!

A UNICORN! IT ***DOES*** EXIST!

MANY OF THE CREATURES OF MYTHOLOGY EXIST IN THIS STRANGE WORLD!

IT SEEMS THAT ***SKARTARIS*** IS A PLACE WHERE ***ALL*** OF MEN'S DREAMS CAN ***COME TRUE.***

"ALMOST IN THAT VERY INSTANT THE ***DREAM*** BECAME A ***NIGHTMARE...***"

I DID IT! I ***GOT*** HIM!

SAVE YOUR BOASTING FOR LATER! ***THE HORN!*** WE ***MUST*** HAVE THE ***SACRED HORN!***

"I FELT MORGAN'S BODY STIFFEN UNTIL IT FAIRLY ***SHOOK*** WITH ***RAGE!***"

"AND THEN HE EXPLODED!"

AAAAAARRH!

"MORGAN'S INHUMAN FURY SEEMED TO FLOW INTO HIS SINGING BLADE AS IT WHIRLED IN AN ARC OF SHEER DESTRUCTION..."

"AND THEN THIS MAN WHO HAD JUST ***SLAIN THREE PEOPLE*** WITHOUT BATTING AN EYE, KNELT BESIDE THE FALLEN UNICORN AND ***WEPT*** LIKE A ***CHILD.***"

HE'S ***BEYOND*** ALL ***UNDERSTANDING!*** WHAT KIND OF MAN COMBINES ***SAVAGERY*** WITH ***SENSITIVITY, FURY*** WITH ***PASSION,*** AND A ***STEEL BLADE*** WITH ***GENTLE HANDS?***

MORGAN IS THAT KIND. HE--!

WATCH OUT!!

WE'VE JUST BEEN ***TALKING*** ABOUT YOU, MORGAN ... AND TRYING TO FIGURE YOU OUT!

DON'T BOTHER, IT WILL ONLY GIVE YOU A ***HEADACHE!***

I KNOW, I'VE ***TRIED!*** BELIEVE ME.

WHAT MAKES A MAN ***TRADE*** A LIFE OF COMFORT AND RELATIVE SECURITY FOR THE LIFE OF A ***WARRIOR,*** A WANDERER WHO DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A PLACE TO CALL ***HOME?***

MAYBE IT'S THE ***THRILL*** OF DISCOVERING A NEW WORLD, AND PERHAPS HAVING A HAND IN SHAPING THE ***FUTURE*** OF THAT WORLD.

MAYBE IT'S THE CHANCE TO LIVE THE LIFE OF ***ADVENTURE*** THAT ***EVERYONE*** DREAMS OF, WHETHER THEY ***ADMIT*** IT OR ***NOT***-- LIFE AS ***FULL*** AND ***RICH,*** AND FILLED WITH ***FIRE*** AS A CUP OF ***BLOOD-RED WINE!***

COMMON SENSE TELLS ME THAT IT WILL BE A ***SHORT*** LIFE AT ***BEST***...

...BUT, BY THE GODS, ***THIS IS LIFE!!!***

NO. 11 MAR.
32482
enter the lost world of
THE WARLORD
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MIKE GRELL